DEDICATION

Written April 25, 2007

At 9:30 a.m. on April 16, 2007, a horrific tragedy occurred as 32 students and professors were senselessly killed at Virginia Tech by a lone gunman. It was particularly sad to discover it was a Virginia Tech student who committed this atrocity. In addition, 28 more students were wounded. Some of the students lost were just beginning their collegiate careers while others were finishing their studies and preparing for vocations as engineers, teachers, veterinarians, dancers, writers, chemists, and international policy makers. Included in the 32 were 9 freshmen, 3 sophomores, 2 juniors, 4 seniors, 9 graduate students, and 5 professors. Some might suggest that more effective mentoring and counseling might have prevented this tragic loss of so many lives in academe.

But one thing is for certain--beginning on April 17th, it has been mentoring and advising that has helped students and faculty deal with the loss of so many of our friends and colleagues and it has been mentoring and advising that has helped students and faculty emerge from the darkest of all days. It has been mentoring and advising that has pulled an academic community together to unanimously agree with what English professor and nationally acclaimed poet Nikki Giovanni so firmly stated at the Convocation April 17, 2007:

We are strong And brave And innocent And unafraid

We are better than we think And not yet quite what we want to be

We are alive to imagination And open to possibility We will continue To invent the future

Through our blood and tears Through all this sadness

We will prevail We will prevail We will prevailWe are Virginia Tech

Because this doctoral book is a collaborative effort of 27 authors who believe in the mission of education to be "alive to imagination and open to

possibility," we dedicate our work to the 32 loved ones from Virginia Tech and their families:

Students

Ross Abdallah Alameddine, Sophomore, University Studies; Brian Roy Bluhm, Master's student, Civil Engineering; Ryan Christopher Clark, Senior, Psychology; Austin Michelle Cloyd, Sophomore, International Studies; Matthew Gregory Gwaltney, Master's student, Environmental Engineering; Caitlin Millar Hammaren, Sophomore, International Studies; Jeremy Michael Herbstritt, Master's student, Civil Engineering; Rachael Elizabeth Hill, Freshman, Biochemistry; Emily Jane Hilscher, Freshman, Animal and Poultry Sciences; Jarrett Lee Lane, Senior, Civil Engineering; Matthew Joseph La Porte, Sophomore, University Studies; Henry J. Lee' Sophomore, Computer Engineering; Partahi Mamora Halomoan Lumbantoruan, Ph.D. student, Civil Engineering; Lauren Ashley McCain, Freshman, International Studies; Daniel Patrick O'Neil, Master's student, Environmental Engineering; Juan Ramon Ortiz-Ortiz, Master's student, Civil Engineering; Minal Hiralal Panchal, Master's student, Architecture; Daniel Alejandro Perez, Sophomore, International Studies; Erin Nicole Peterson, Freshman, International Studies; Michael Steven Pohle, Jr., Senior, Biological Sciences; Julia Kathleen Pryde, Master's student, Biological Systems Engineering; Mary Karen Read' Freshman, Interdisciplinary Studies; Reema Joseph Samaha, Freshman, University Studies; Waleed Mohamed Shaalan, Ph.D. student, Civil Engineering; Leslie Geraldine Sherman, Junior, History; Maxine Shelly Turner, Senior, Chemical Engineering; Nicole White, Sophomore, International Studies.

Faculty

Christopher James Bishop, Instructor, Foreign Languages; Jocelyne Couture-Nowak, Adjunct Professor, Foreign Languages; Kevin P. Granata, Professor, Engineering Science and Mechanics; Liviu Librescu, Professor, Engineering Science and Mechanics; G.V. Loganathan, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering.

PREFACE

It is a safe prediction that in the next fifty years, schools and universities will change more and more drastically than they have since they assumed their present form more than three hundred years ago …. (Drucker, 2002, p. 79)

The Handbook of Doctoral Programs in Educational Leadership: Issues and Challenges came into being following a session at the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) conference in August 2006, which was held in Lexington, Kentucky. The session, titled "Doctoral Program Issues: A Panel Discussion" was one of the very first in a national forum to focus on contemporary and complex issues of doctoral education in educational leadership. Numerous academics presented individual and joint papers at this well-attended session. The presentations focused on various topics that serve as the overarching themes or organizers of this volume: development and administration of doctoral programs, perspectives on the dissertation process, and lessons learned in the delivery of doctoral programs.

The enthusiastic response to this session underscored the obvious appeal of the topic of doctoral education for the membership. It also made apparent that the educational leadership field was ready to take a more significant step in this direction. Masters-level education, with its crucial but dominant focus on such issues as educational leadership standards, program improvement, preparation and certification, and school improvement, has long engaged the minds and energies of our colleagues in the field over the years. Accordingly, editors of journals and publishers of books in educational leadership have fallen in line, sponsoring works pertaining to school leadership preparation and school improvement. The time is ripe for giving much-needed attention to program-related doctoral issues. We, the editors, saw the need to nudge this subject into the fore, with the hope that this book will ignite and sustain scholarly conversation around pertinent ideas. After inviting the participants from the conference session to contribute to a project focused on doctoral programs in educational leadership, we extended the invitation to all NCPEA members and our

University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) colleagues involved in doctoral level education.

Our intended audience for this book features university faculty and administrators in educational leadership/administration programs; program developers in higher education and K–12 education; school district and campus leaders; and scholars, researchers, and doctoral students.

On a biographical note, we, the editors, are deeply invested in the goal of inquiring into and transforming doctoral education for the better. We are writers of doctoral-oriented texts (most recently, A Graduate Student Guide, Changing Mindsets of Educational Leaders to Improve Schools, Educational Administration Fire and Ice, and Schools and Data) and teachers of various doctoral-level courses, some of which we have created ourselves (such as Action Research Practicum, Analysis of Curriculum and Instruction, Communication in a Global Society, Doctoral Synthesis, Educational Management, Graduate Seminar, Issues in Curriculum and Instruction, Mentoring Theory and Leadership Practice, Teacher Evaluation, and Readings in Educational Leadership Research). Further, we share an ongoing commitment to bridge theory and practice in our writings and practices, as do the contributors to this volume.

Our goals and purpose of this book are aimed at advancing understanding in areas relating to educational leadership and administration, and to enhance the capability and efficacy of university programs. We are focused on developing better methods of pedagogy and instruction to help bring about more effective academic and professional development programs for all doctoral students and faculty in educational administration. Finally, we strive to create more effective pathways and networks for exchanging new understandings and viable strategies among persons working to advance educational administration. The contributors collectively address numerous areas of the field related to the theme of better preparing school leaders in doctoral programs. Some of the specific topics include program accreditation, design and delivery, innovations in educational leadership, curricular and instructional improvement, dissertation conventions and writing, self-reflection and professional growth, social justice in leadership and learning, and mentoring theory and practice.

The topic of doctoral issues and challenges is timely, if not cutting-edge, in the educational administration field and literature. We agreed that it would be powerful to produce a document that exclusively focuses on the changing landscape of doctoral programs in our discipline, especially as they are emerging in more places and in non-traditional ways. Offering a broad, multi-disciplinary treatment of doctoral education is Golde, Walker, and Associates' (2006) Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education. This collection of essays, commissioned by the Carnegie Initiative, adopts a wide view of the doctorate in education. The authors attend to such broad-sweeping issues as the call to restructure EdD and PhD programs, fragmentation and division across fields, and scholarly inquiry in such areas as educational psychology. In contrast, The Handbook of Doctoral Programs in Educational Leadership attends exclusively to doctoral program initiatives and reforms in educational leadership/administration, and it is the first book of its kind. This handbook covers multiple doctoral programs from across the United States and a myriad of interconnected perspectives on the preparation of school leaders are articulated. The contributing authors are all experienced in leading programmatic changes in higher education contexts.

This handbook is an invaluable resource for aspiring doctoral students in educational leadership. The contributors provide information about program- and dissertation-related issues and offer an insider's view of the culture of doctoral education, specifically in the area of educational leadership. Importantly, the book provides relevant information for professors and departments of education that are designing and re-designing doctoral programs. Further, it serves as an informational resource for state coordinating boards about issues that surround the development, implementation, and delivery of doctoral programs in educational leadership—new and existent. We have attempted to honor the solid foundations that have been established in the discipline while proactively shaping the future by documenting common understandings. We also strived to create unity and shared purposes but in the context of difference and idiosyncrasy—we welcomed different voices and perspectives, and urged faculty to write who represent various program niches.

This handbook has the potential to move the field forward by revealing the processes that prepare educational leaders for today's educational environments through such mechanisms as action research, collaborative research, problem-based learning, and scholarly inquiry. Educational leadership faculty have enacted new forms of delivery for developing qualified educational leaders through such means as cohort grouping, content focused on problems of practice and democratic issues, critical inquiry skills development, moral and ethical practice, identity construction as scholar-practitioner leaders, effective mentoring and mentoring structures, and alternative forms of assessment. Clearly, there has been an under-reporting of the progress made in advanced educational leadership programs. Our book is the first to address this important missing link by describing recent innovative reform of the EdD and PhD in this field.

While the process of change has greatly influenced university preparation programs, much effort has been applied to masters-level and certification programs; however, as stated earlier, while increasingly doctoral programs have been undergoing revision, the literature lags behind at this level. By closely examining doctoral education, we hope to attract scholars and practitioners to this under-studied but vibrant area. Collectively we focus on the front-end of doctoral study (e.g., issues of recruitment and admissions), the in-between (e.g., quality of faculty mentoring, innovations in program and instructional design, scholarly research development, research preparation for satisfying the demands in high accountability results-oriented environments), and the back-end (e.g., completion rates, scholarly productivity, and post-graduate issues). More attention is needed in the literature on the "in between" within graduate programs (Nettles & Millett, 2006). Thus, we posit that much can be learned from sharing insights into and lessons learned about quality issues at the doctoral level related to organizational and systemic change, program development and design, mentoring and advising, doctoral student–faculty and peer relationships, scholarly inquiry, and critical and collaborative/group learning. Issues and challenges in educational standards, data-driven evaluation and assessment models, accreditation and program reform, curriculum and instruction, social justice and equity, collaboration and dialogue, dissertation (project) preparation and writing, student recruitment and admissions, faculty and

student development, doctoral research coursework, and the cohort delivery model are all of general concern in our field.

Education is always marked by challenge and change, but there is, more than ever, a special call for universities that prepare educational leaders. A compelling need exists for programs that are scholarly and relevant, contextualized to meet the changing needs of practitioners in schools, districts, and other educational places of work. We are reminded of the Drucker (2002) quote from Managing in a Time of Great Change cited at the beginning of this preface.

One way this change has been manifested is in the numerous educational leadership doctoral programs that have sprung up in the past 25 years. Educating doctoral students for leadership was once primarily the role of research universities, but this charge has broadened to include many regional universities throughout the nation. At the same time, criticism by the media has been fierce about the quality of new and old programs. This has necessitated the importance of dialogue on how to best bring about change to structure university doctoral programs in educational leadership to prepare individuals who are both scholarly and effective practitioners.

Doctoral programs that follow the transformative scholar-practitioner model are incorporated in this volume. Evidence that this model results in transformed lives and practice was described in several independent studies of doctoral cohorts that credited their scholar-practitioner program with transforming their leadership paradigms and practices to one of expanding notions of social justice, increasing personal capacity, recognizing a need for authenticity, nurturing an enhanced sensitivity to others, and challenging their own unfinished learning to continue as lifelong learners (e.g., Harris, 2005; Horn, 2001; Mullen, 2005).

Readers, we invite you to join our conversation in an effort to learn about one another's advanced programs and to more fully explore contemporary issues in doctoral education. Most definitely, we welcome your reactions to this book and the opportunity for expanded dialogue.

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AN EMPIRICAL DESCRIPTION OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

There are many choices that need to be made in the development and/or redesign of doctoral program. Among these choices are the usual questions including the following:

1. How many credit hours post Master's should it be? (usually 60)
2. How long can a student take to complete? (usually 6 or 7 years, with a possible leave of absence and an extension of time for unusual circumstances such as the doctoral program disruption caused by Hurricane Katrina)
3. Will students have a choice of courses to take? (Are the courses proscribed or can a student develop a program plan of courses selected from a menu of possible choices?)
4. Is there are comprehensive examination? If so, what is the nature and content of it? Is it written, oral, or both?
5. Does the dissertation have to use traditional research (i.e. quantitative or qualitative research methodologies) or can they do a non-traditional dissertation such as a cost/benefit analysis, a program evaluation study, or a program design?

This is, of course, not a comprehensive listing of the choices to be made in the design of a doctoral program. The common (mis)perception is that doctoral programs in educational leadership nationally have essentially the same components. However, there exists great variation in the design and delivery of these components.

This chapter reports the results of a survey of doctoral programs in educational leadership that was conducted in fall 2006 for inclusion in this volume. The universities that offered doctoral degree programs in educational leadership were identified in the 24th Edition of the Educational Administration Directory 2005-2006, compiled by Creighton, Coleman, and Dou for NCPEA. In that directory, there were 128 universities that offered an EdD degree program in educational leadership/administration, 48 universities that offered a PhD degree program, and 60 universities that offered both the EdD and PhD degree programs. A survey instrument was sent to a sample of 50%, or 88, of these

176 universities. The sample universities were randomly selected, but had a geographically representative distribution. The survey instrument was sent via email to the chair of the selected educational leadership departments. A response was received from 23 or approximately 25% of the sample universities. The survey instrument consisted of questions concerned with 21 aspects regarding their doctoral program. The results of the analysis of the survey are reported below.

The GRE

The first series of questions focused on the use of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) as an admission requirement. The first question asked if they (the doctoral program) used the GRE. Of the 23 respondent universities, less than half required the GRE. Eleven require the Verbal portion of the GRE, while only 9 require the quantitative portion of the GRE. The average GRE verbal score was 511, with one university requiring a minimum required score of 400 and with a required score of 650. The average GRE quantitative score was 507. The total minimum required GRE, including both the verbal and quantitative portions of the GRE, had an average of 973, with the majority of the degree programs requiring a minimum of 1000. It must be noted that both the content and the scoring of the GRE will be changed as of September, 2007.

Use of Grade Point Averages

The next variable had a focus on the Undergraduate Grade Point Average (UGPA) required for admission in the doctoral program. Seventy five percent of the respondents do require a certain UGPA. The modal score was 3.0 UGPA, with an average of 2.88. The highest was a 3.5 UGPA. All of the programs required a Graduate GPA that ranged between 3.0 – 3.5.

Transfer of Credits

With regard to the transfer of credits for prior graduate coursework, 835 did allow for transfer of credits with 12 being the most common number of credits reported. This transfer variable ranged from a low of 0 credits allowed to be transferred to a high of 30 transfer credits.

Maximum Years of Study, Leave of Absence and Program Extensions

With regard to the maximum number of years of study allowed for completion of the degree, the average was 6.7 years, with a mode of 7 years. Two respondents allowed up to 10 years for program completion. Virtually all of the programs (87%) required the student to maintain continuous registration in the program. However, 78% of the doctoral programs allowed students to take a leave of absence of one year, and 70% allowed the students an extension of time for completion. Thus there is a good deal of flexibility in this requirement.

Total Course Credits, Research Credits and Ed. Administration Credits Required

The total number of post master's degree credits required for program completion also varied greatly. The range was 45 to 92, with a mean of 66.6 credits and a mode of 60 credits. Of those credits, the average number of credits of research related coursework was 11.8 with a mode of 12 credits of research. The range for this variable was 3 to 18 credits. With regard to the number of credits required in educational administration, leadership, and management, the average was 22.5 with a mode of 24 credits.

The Comprehensive Examination

Included within the requirements for degree completion was the comprehensive examination. Most (87%) of the degree programs did require the students to successfully complete a written comprehensive examination, and 65% percent also required the students to successfully complete an oral, as well as a written comprehensive exam.

Candidacy

The overwhelming majority (87%) of the doctoral programs in educational leadership required the students to attain candidacy after the completion of coursework and the comprehensive examination.

Credit Hours of Dissertation Coursework

Most of the doctoral programs in educational leadership required the students to successfully undertake a dissertation. Only 10% of the programs did not require a dissertation. The modal number of dissertation credits was 12, with a range of 0 to 24 credits.

Number of Weeks in a Semester

The number of weeks in a semester of study varied across those doctoral programs responding to the survey. Fifty percent required 15 weeks of study, with a range of 9 to 18 weeks.

Summary

It is evident that there is a great deal of variation in the policies and procedures of doctoral programs in educational leadership. This volume will discuss many of these components, and aid those designing a doctoral program.

Reference

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Author Biography

Frederick L. Dembowski is the Hibernian Endowed Professor, and Head of the Department of Educational Leadership and Technology at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. He received his EdD from the University of Rochester, New York. He has served as a professor, department head and dean for over 25 years at Purdue University, SUNY Albany, Lynn University and the National University of Somalia, Africa. His work has focused on school business management, management, and international development of educational organizations. He currently serves as the Editor of the AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice. He is also the Managing Editor of The NCPEA/CONNEXIONS Project. He has over 100 publications including: Effective School District Management (1999), published by AASA and Scarecrow Press; and Unbridled Spirit: Best

Practices in Educational Administration – the 2006 NCPEA YEARBOOK (2006), published by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration.

Cohort Doctoral Preparation Programs: Neo-Institutional Perspectives

Purpose

The purpose of our efforts is to explore the use of cohorts using a neo-institutional lens (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2001). This project is exploratory and conceptual. It is aimed more at identifying issues and questions for more thorough and finely grained analysis than at arriving at definitive conclusions. However, in addressing this purpose we also seek to raise questions about how program decisions are made. This is a critically important issue for the field in today's environment. Buffeted by calls for reform and by threats to alter the role of the university in the preparation of educational leaders (Petersen & Young, 2004), the harsh criticisms leveled against preparatory programs by Levine (2005), and calls for a redefinition of educational doctoral programs (e.g., Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006), the field is in need of critical reflection about how it does its work and how it selects the means to prepare educational leaders. We suggest that one lens that will aid the field in fostering the quality of critical reflection required is neo-institutional theory. To illustrate the potential contribution of this theory as a lens to support critical reflection by the field we explore two issues: (a) change in the use of cohorts in leadership preparation programs over time and (b) factors and processes that neo-institutional theory would suggest has led to their widespread use.

Theoretical Perspectives

Universities are characterized by unclear goals, ambiguous connections between technologies employed (e.g., instructional strategies) and outcomes, and fluid participation of organizational members (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). In addition, educational outcomes that are achieved tend to be difficult to measure, even if agreement can be reached about which outcomes should be pursued. These characteristics of organized anarchy insert much uncertainty into organizational life within universities (Cohen et al., 1972; Hanson, 2001). Meyer and Rowan (1977) have posited that under these uncertain conditions organizations strive for legitimacy because the structural forms necessary for technical efficiency and effectiveness are either not known or are not amenable to adequate testing. Thus, organizations adopt structures that are acceptable to an organization's stakeholders, and other members of the institution's organizational and professional fields. These structures reflect rationalized myths that serve symbolic and theatrical functions. They serve symbolic functions by capturing and communicating meaning internally among organizational members. But they also function as theater insofar as images projected externally serve to contribute to the organization's legitimacy within society (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Bolman & Deal, 2003). The logic therefore is that educational preparation programs must be effective because they have legitimacy – they take on acceptable, widespread form – in this instance, a cohort structure.

The manner in which organizational structures and practices become increasingly homogenized has been the subject of much theorizing and research. In their seminal work on this topic, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified two forms of isomorphism, or "a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (p. 149). The first, competitive isomorphism, focuses on market competition and an organization's need for resources and customers. Competitive isomorphism is most relevant under conditions where free and open competition is characteristic of the organizational environment. In competitive isomorphism, organizations are said to adapt to changing environmental conditions in order to "fit" the environment and be able to obtain needed resources.

The other form of isomorphism is institutional, the focus of this article. In this case organizations compete not just for resources and clients, but also for "… political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 150). Thus, neo-institutional theory posits that meanings in the minds of organizational participants become reified "social facts" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2001, p. 42). These "social facts" undergird particular belief systems and structures that dominate an organizational field, or a population of organizations, like universities or departments of educational leadership, that offer similar services and share some common environmental pressures (Scott, 2001). Neo-institutionalism " . . . takes as a starting point the striking homogeneity of practices and arrangements . . ." (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991, p. 9) found in these organizational fields.

Neo-institutionalism includes four analytic categories or heuristic devices that aid in reflecting on why and by what means certain beliefs and structures come to dominate a field and contribute to its isomorphic features: "mechanisms," "carriers," "field logics," and "sources of influence." Each of these heuristic devices is explored in the paragraphs which follow.

Mechanisms and Carriers

The first two analytic devices focus on the forms that "social facts" take (i.e. regulations, norms, and/or values/beliefs), the mechanisms through which they are distributed across organizations and the "carriers" of a particular form.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identify three mechanisms by which institutional isomorphic change occurs: coercive, mimetic, and normative. Although DiMaggio and Powell present these mechanisms as conceptually separate, they also note that the typology is an analytic one; the mechanisms are not necessarily empirically distinct. Mizruchi and Fein (1999) support connections among the three mechanisms by noting that most research on institutional isomorphism has focused on the mimetic mechanism at the expense of the other two, thereby distorting DiMaggio's and Powell's original conceptualization. With this in mind, we employ these three

mechanisms both separately and in concert to analyze the isomorphic nature of cohort usage in educational leadership preparation programs.

Coercion. Coercive isomorphism derives from political influence, authority, and problems of legitimacy. It is the result of formal and informal pressures to conform that are imposed on an organization by other organizations and by cultural expectations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Formal pressures or "social facts" include governmental statutes, rules, and regulations, as well as standards of accrediting agencies that are generally carried by organizations and persons with some level of relevant authority. While formal, explicit coercion is the most evident form of this mechanism, subtle, informal demands may also contribute to isomorphic change. For example, Mizruchi and Fein (1999) have noted that even anticipated pressures from actors in the environment may influence an organization's behavior.

Mimetic behavior. Mimicking other organizations occurs especially under conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity – when organizations possess characteristics of organized anarchies. The "model organization" may be unaware that others are copying it, and mimicking may occur unintentionally or intentionally. It may, for example, be the unexpected result of the transfer of personnel from one organization to another, or occur because personnel purposefully adopt practices described in the literature or heed the advice of a consultant. Due to an organization's wish to be perceived as legitimate under conditions of uncertainty, organizations tend to model themselves after other organizations that are perceived to be highly successful and more legitimate (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Normative processes. Norming relates to the processes by which a profession seeks to maintain jurisdiction over work, domains of knowledge, and the reproduction of its kind (Abbott, 1988; Larson, 1977). Three aspects of these processes are central to isomorphic change. First is the shared knowledge base of a profession, including its belief system about the reproduction of its kind. Second is the networking among professionals that cuts across organizations and is supported by professional associations through conferences, newsletters, and publications. These networks serve as robust carriers of structure within an organizational field. In their study of

the philanthropic practices of corporate managers, Galaskiewicz and Wasserman (1989) found that networking was, for example, closely related to mimetic behaviors. The managers who Galaskiewicz and Wasserman studied tended to mimic persons they knew and trusted instead of individuals who worked for more successful and prestigious organizations, as purely mimetic views of isomorphism would predict. Thus, social networks, especially when related to the normative mechanism, play an important role in achievement of isomorphic change. Third, is the career track of leaders within a profession. Career tracks, themselves, tend to be somewhat homogenized across organizations and within professions. As a consequence, differences between organizational leaders tend to be bounded due to socialization and other isomorphic forces at work within a profession (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This normative boundedness constrains leaders' behaviors and choices in that they seek to provide legitimacy of their organization within the field by selecting structures that have been accepted as social facts by the field.

Field Logics

Field logics, the next analytic device include the " . . . belief systems and related practices that predominate in an organizational field" (Scott, 2001, p. 139). Friedland and Alford (in Scott, 2001, p. 139) have noted that these logics provide the "organizing principles" that organizational participants use to carry out their work. Field logics vary across four dimensions – content, penetration, linkage, and exclusiveness.

Content is the meaning and interpretation field participants give to belief systems. Penetration is the vertical depth and strength with which particular belief systems are held by participants. Linkages refer to the horizontal connections participants make between different belief systems. For example the linkage between belief in the outcomes of cohorts and beliefs about the Ed.D. degree as a practice-oriented, professional degree. Exclusiveness is the extent to which one field logic predominates or competing logics vie for acceptance (Scott, 2001, pp. 139-140).

Sources of Influence

The final analytic device draws our attention to the sources from which institutionalization springs. Scott (1987) has highlighted seven different sources:

- Imposition of organizational structure. In this case agents impose common structure either by virtue of their authority or through their use of coercive power. This form of influence is comparable to the mechanism of coercion (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).
- Authorization of organizational structure. In this situation a subordinate unit voluntarily complies with the wishes of an agent in order to obtain approval of that agent (as in choosing to be accredited when accreditation is not required to operate a program).
- Inducement of organizational structure. Another agent induces change by requiring the change as a condition of funding the organization.
- Acquisition of organizational structure. In this situation organizational actors deliberately choose to acquire structural models and employ mimetic and/or normative mechanisms to do so.
- Imprinting of organizational structure. An organization takes on particular structural characteristics for an organizational field at the time of its founding. For example, as new doctoral programs are established, a cohort structure is chosen because that structure is characteristic of the field.
- Incorporation of organizational structure. Through incremental environmental adaptation, organizations over time incorporate environmental structures into their own structure.
- Bypassing organizational structure. Within the context of strong cultural institutional structures, organizational structures may not need to be as complex and elaborate as in cases where the cultural structures are weak (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In this case "cultural controls can substitute for structural controls" (Scott, 1987, p. 507).

Taken together the analytic devices of mechanisms, carriers, field logics, and sources of institutionalism provide a framework for critically examining how and why the field of educational leadership has chosen to use cohorts.

Analysis

We used two sources of information to explore the strength and penetration of cohorts in educational preparation doctoral programs, change in use of cohorts over time, and the factors and processes that have led to the "strength" and "penetration" of cohort structure in the field. The first information source was extant research literature that reported the range of cohort use in educational leadership programs.

The second source of information was the frequency with which cohorts have been a focus of the field's literature for a twenty year period (1985-2005). We used data on frequency of cohort focus to supplement information from existing studies on cohorts (first source of information). Key word searches for "cohort" and related terms (such as doctoral, educational leadership, and superintendency) were conducted in (a) Google Scholar, (b) the Emerald database, (c) ERIC, and (d) the Educational Administration Quarterly. In addition, we conducted a search on the term, "cohort," in the title or abstracts of presentations made at the annual meetings of the University Council for Educational Administration from 1985-2005. We checked across all sources to ensure there were no duplicate entries. This analysis not only permitted a focus on the overall volume of literature about cohorts but also an exploration about how the frequency of attention to cohorts has changed over time. The value of this type of analysis is predicated on three assumptions. The first is that the frequency with which cohorts are a focus in the literature is a function of their use in educational preparation programs (i.e., if they are used by educational leadership departments they will become a focus of research and writing). Second, their appearance in the literature is a demonstration of individual faculty members' interest in this programmatic form – they are of sufficient merit to attract the interest of those who design and teach in them. Third, a focus on cohorts in the literature demonstrates a shared belief in the field (acted on by reviewers of manuscripts and paper proposals) that cohorts are of sufficient interest and importance to merit the allocation of scarce resources (publication space, paper presentation slots) to their consideration. Thus, the literature of the field serves as a way to gauge the strength and the level of penetration that a field logic, such as cohorts, has achieved in an organizational field.

The remaining issue of what factors and processes have led to the strength and penetration of cohorts in the field was addressed by applying the heuristic devices introduced earlier to the field's research about cohorts and other factors at work in the field. Our analysis and presentation of it were guided primarily by the three mechanisms of isomorphic change (coercive, mimetic, and normative). The analysis led to the identification of a number of questions about the processes by which cohort use has become so prevalent in the field. These questions, as well as the findings and analyses that led to them, allow us to propose a framework for further inquiry into this phenomenon.

Observations

In this section we provide analysis that establishes the foundation for the framework recommended later. We first explore the level of cohort use in doctoral preparation programs. Then we analyze isomorphic processes that may account for the level of use reported.

Cohort Usage as Reported in Extant Research

In his 1999 monograph on the state of the educational leadership profession, Murphy noted that changes in preparation programs have included changes in program structures. He also noted that "perhaps the most distinct piece of the structural mosaic has been the widespread implementation of cohort programs" (p. 42). This widespread use of cohorts is also supported by three recent studies. Norton (1995), in a survey of UCEA institutions, found that 30 (70%) of responding institutions reported use of cohorts. Most institutions that used cohorts did so for doctoral programs (70%). Half of the institutions had been using cohorts for six or more years, while the other half had adopted this program structure within one to five years of the study.

In 1994, McCarthy & Kuh (1997) surveyed chairs or coordinators of 371 educational administration / leadership units in four-year colleges and universities in the United States. Responses were received from 254 (68%) of those surveyed. Responding chairs/coordinators reported that more than half of EdD students were enrolled in cohorts. McCarthy and Kuh also conducted discriminant analyses in order to identify characteristics

(program and faculty variables) that differentiated between research, doctoral, and comprehensive institutions. The use of cohorts was not found to be a distinguishing variable among the different types of institutions.

Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, and Norris (2000) surveyed 383 United States and Canadian university educational administration programs listed in the Educational Administration Directory (Lane, 1996 in Barnett, et al., 2000). Two hundred twenty-three programs responded (58% response rate) and of this number 141 (63%) reported using cohorts in some or all of their preparation programs. Barnett et al. also compared cohort usage on the basis of institutional size and priority on teaching, research and service. They found that cohorts tended to be used more frequently in institutions with 10,000 or more students and in institutions that emphasized research rather than teaching or service.

Cohort Use as Reflected in the Field's Literature

Another gauge of the field's interest in cohorts is the extent to which cohorts are a focus of the field's literature. As noted earlier, we conducted a literature search in order to track the frequency with which cohorts have been addressed in selected sources from 1985 through 2005. We conducted this analysis recognizing that cohorts have been explicitly or implicitly recommended as program structures since the 1950s (Achilles, 1994), if not before (Basom, Yerkes, Norris, & Barnett, 1995). However, our interest was to focus on a recent era in order to investigate the current level of interest in cohorts and to confine our analysis of isomorphic processes to the past twenty years, and especially to the past decade.

Results of our analysis of the literature are portrayed in Table 1. As noted there, within the time period explored, mention of cohorts was first found in 1987, but significant mention of them in the literature we reviewed was not found until 1992. The frequency with which cohorts were addressed increased especially between the late 1990s through 2004 after which a decline was witnessed in 2005 (which may be a function of delay in data entry in some of the data bases we explored). Although certainly a limited gauge of cohort use, these data nonetheless suggest that interest in cohorts within the field has increased over the past twenty years.

Table 1

Occurrence of "Cohort" in the Literature by Source and Year

Year	Reviewed Research Literature on Cohorts	Annual Meetings of UCEA	Total
1985	0	0	0
1986	0	0	0
1987	1	0	1
1988	1	0	1
1989	4	0	4
1990	1	0	1
1991	1	1	2
1992	7	2	9
1993	10	1	11
1994	8	0	8
1995	8	1	9
1996	8	1	9
1997	11	0	11
1998	5	5	10
1999	9	1	10
2000	21	2	23
2001	24	2	26
2002	27	5	32
2003	13	6	19
2004	12	11	23
2005	5	4	9
Total	176	42	218

Existing survey data about cohort use, as well as our analysis of the literature, lead to two observations. First, cohorts have indeed become widespread in doctoral programs and if our analysis of the literature is any indication, interest in them, if not their use has grown steadily in the past two decades. Therefore, it would appear that this particular programmatic structure or field logic has achieved at least a moderate level of penetration for doctoral programs in a relatively short amount of time. However, cohorts have yet to become an exclusive field logic for educational leadership doctoral programs. This lack of absolute homogeneity in reported use highlights the continuous, rather than the dichotomous, nature of institutionalization (Krasner, 1988), as well as the possibility for alternative structures and field logics to coexist within the same organizational field (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). Still, the apparent growth in the use of cohorts over the past several years requires exploration

of reasons for their increase. This question is addressed later in our analysis of the mechanisms of isomorphic change.

Second, results reported in extant research literature on cohorts raise questions about whether differences exist among different types of higher education institutions in the use of cohorts. Although McCarthy and Kuh (1997) reported no difference in use between types of institutions, Barnett et al. (2000) suggest that differences do exist, with larger, research oriented institutions using cohorts more frequently than other types of institutions. Whether these conflicting results are a function of different data collection times and procedures, the use of different typologies to categorize institutions, or differences in who responded to the two surveys cannot be discerned from the information provided. More research is required about cohort use by different types of institutions. As noted later, the results of such research would contribute in important ways to the understanding of mimetic pressures within the field.

Isomorphic Mechanisms

As noted earlier, three forms of isomorphic pressure lead to increasing levels of homogeneity in structures and field logics employed by organizations to gain legitimacy in a field. Each of these is explored below with reference to cohort use.

Coercion. Coercive processes require either explicit or implicit influence from an agent on an organization to comply with its wish for a particular organizational structure. As noted earlier, this influence may actually be exercised or organizational personnel may anticipate becoming subjects of future coercion, if they fail to comply with coercive pressures. In addition, agents of coercion can act either from a basis of authority (to which the target organization acquiesces) or by using coercive power, threatening sanctions and other forms of punishment for failure to comply.

In the case of cohort use, only one condition of the coercive mechanism appears to apply. This condition is the general belief among educational leadership faculty that failure to reform preparation programs may result in actions by members of the professional field to weaken higher education's role as the major provider of these programs. Over the past few years

national attention on public education in general, and school leaders in particular, has helped form a trenchant perception of university preparation programs. Newspaper accounts such as those in Education Week, and the more widely read New York Times and USA Today, have covered broad leadership issues but have also focused on leadership preparation. For the most part these articles have been highly critical of traditional university preparation programs and represent, in large measure, current popular opinion of university-based educational leadership preparation (Guthrie & Sanders, 2001; Young & Petersen, 2002; Petersen, 1999). More recently, Levine's call for discontinuance of EdD programs in favor of master's programs similar to the M.B.A. highlights anew the range of threats that have surfaced to stimulate a variety of reforms, including calls for redefining the traditional EdD (Shulman, et al., 2005).This unyielding scrutiny has leadership preparation programs in a precarious position. Decreased institutional support, stronger state licensure mandates, federal and government sponsored initiatives designed to prepare school leaders outside of the university setting, coupled with alternative licensure for school administrators are evidence of external groups' dissatisfaction with the performance of university programs in preparing educational leaders:

Over the past few years, the national attention focused on educational leadership has escalated. Dewitt-Wallace Readers Digest Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the Annenberg Foundation, the Broad Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the National Governors Association, Educational Officials, and the leaders of several national corporations, among others, have all expressed interest in the training and preparation of school leaders. Their focus on this issue has brought with it millions of dollars in research and program funding… For the most part, [they are] critical of traditional university preparation of school and school system leaders and/or supportive of alternative preparation programs. (Young & Petersen, 2002, p.1).

Other than these generalized threats about creating alternatives to university leadership preparation programs, we are unaware of any external agent within the organizational field (state departments, accreditation associations, professional associations, practitioners, etc.) that is requiring, either by virtue of authority or threat of sanctions, the use of cohort

structures to deliver leadership preparation programs. Therefore, the condition of anticipated coercion that does obtain in this instance acts not in a specific way but generally. University programs do not anticipate that failure to reform preparation programs will result in the imposition of a cohort structure by external agents or the application of specific sanctions. Rather, faculty appear to share a diffuse understanding that reform is indeed necessary if higher education is to maintain it's predominate role in leadership preparation. Additional evidence of this diffuse threat are English's (2006) concerns about the routinization and standardization of preparation programs as a consequence of the application of ELCC and NCATE standards.

Thus, the legitimacy of program sponsorship and programs themselves has been put into play by some members of the organizational field (e.g., accrediting bodies, foundations). The perception of potential coercive action by these and other actors can influence program decisions (Gates, 1997), including decisions made about programmatic forms needed to achieve legitimacy and avoid coercive actions. One acceptable form and image of reform – contributing to institutions' perceived legitimacy as major producers of school leaders – may very well be cohorts, a fact highlighted by Levine's (2005, p. 51) mention of them when touting the effectiveness of the Broad Foundation's Urban Superintendent's Academy. Coercion does not appear to be the principal mechanism for this isomorphic tendency. Rather, the appropriateness and acceptability of cohorts appear to be more a consequence of mimetic and normative processes as we discuss below. But the condition of anticipated coercion may well have established a diffuse but powerful understanding and environmental force-field within the profession that reform is necessary. The resultant climate may have served to strengthen beliefs about the acceptability of cohorts as structures that can provide legitimacy and social fitness for the profession – i.e., creating a linkage between the two field logics of reform and cohort use.

Mimetic behavior. Organizations can purposefully acquire structures by modeling their configurations after those of other organizations within the organizational field, or what Scott (1987) has labeled "acquisition." Mimicking occurs most frequently under two conditions – uncertainty and

when other organizations are viewed as being more legitimate and successful than the one doing the copying.

Despite the widespread use of cohorts we still have little data that support their efficacy in preparing education leaders (Barnett, et al., 2000; Scribner & Donaldson, 2001). Most research has supported the contributions cohorts make to affective outcomes (e.g., development of interpersonal skills, providing emotional support to learners) (Scribner & Donaldson, 2001). The most glaring gap in evidence about cohort efficacy is in the area of their contribution to preparation of successful educational leaders (Barnett, et al., 2000). Yet, our evidence about other structures used in preparation programs is no better. As Barnett et al. (2000) have noted, ". . . little anecdotal or empirical evidence exists to support claims that preparation programs make a difference to school leaders" (p. 277). Thus, the organizational field is faced with much uncertainty about the technical effectiveness of its programs. Under these conditions, we expect organizations to mimic others they perceive to be more legitimate and more successful.

The meanings of legitimacy and success in academe are more difficult to address, in that no clear definitions of either exists, and even with the definitions we do have, the measures of these two attributes remain subjects of debate. One possibility, however, is that cohorts have been increasingly used because they mimic the traditional structures employed in the preparation programs of professions considered of higher status and more successful (e.g., medicine, law, business) than educational leadership (Abbott, 1998; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Miner, 2002). Similar mimicking has been observed in the case of other professions. For example, the accounting profession mimicked law and the clergy in adopting the partnership organizational form (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). Although this form of modeling has been suggested for the adoption of cohort structures (e.g., Saltiel & Russo, 2001), we have found no data or accounts that directly support this claim, pointing to another area where research is needed.

Another approach to the issue of legitimacy is to consider, like reputational studies, those institutions and programs that have higher national rankings.

If these are the programs others aspire to mimic, then do they use cohorts? Definitive answers to this question are also lacking. The best information available is the mixed results of the Barnett et al. (2000) and McCarthy and Kuh (1997) studies. As noted earlier Barnett et al. found cohorts to be used more extensively by institutions considered to be "higher" in academic categorization (i.e., larger, research institutions). However, McCarthy and Kuh found that the use of cohorts was not a variable that differentiated between comprehensive, doctoral, and research institutions.

Therefore, while the condition of uncertainty would suggest that the widespread use of cohorts has occurred in part due to educational leadership programs mimicking each other or the more prestigious professions, no data provide clear support for this conclusion. However, if mimicking behavior is indeed occurring, even less is known about what programs are serving as models for others and on what basis they are judged to be more legitimate and successful. These are questions that need to be addressed empirically.

Also, if modeling is occurring, the content of beliefs about cohorts, as well as linkages made between these field logics, need exploration – i.e., what beliefs are actually embedded in this modeling behavior and how are these linked to other belief systems? For example, some researchers (e.g., Cordeiro, et al., 1993; Weise, 1992; Saltiel & Russo, 2001; Barnett, et al., 2000) have suggested that cohorts are seen as mechanisms that provide program coherence and integrity, support student recruitment, and provide an effective way to organize students and limited faculty resources. Faculty opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of cohorts indeed appear to center as much or more on logistical and administrative issues as on their impact on learning and leadership performance (Barnett, et al., 2000). Therefore, is this field logic more about logistical arrangements and connected more to issues of effective and efficient resource utilization? If so, then how has it become connected to issues of learning outcomes, professional performance, and reform of educational leadership preparation programs? Also, how has this particular form of the field logic been promulgated throughout the field – i.e., more by administrators than by faculty members? These too are questions that need to be addressed.

Normative Processes

"Organizations in a structured field…respond to an environment that consists of organizations responding to an environment of organizations' responses," (Powel & DiMaggio, 1991, p. 65)

We have argued so far that the use of cohorts in doctoral leadership preparation programs is ubiquitous (Barnett, et.al., 2000; Hart & Pounder, 1999; McCarthy & Kuh, 1997; Norton, 1995). We have also articulated that little conclusive evidence exists that clearly delineates that their use and implementation are principally the result of coercive processes, nor does the extant literature indicate that their frequency is solely a mimetic function. This leaves open the possibility that cohort structures are popular in these settings due also to normative forces.

Educational leadership faculty, like members of other professions, can find themselves subject to a third isomorphic pressure, which is the normative version originating primarily from the collective effort of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work in order to legitimize their occupational autonomy (Larson, 1977; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). As DiMaggio & Powell (1983) have noted, "normative" pressure is especially likely to be found in the professional sectors.

As previously stated, the popular, public and unrelenting dissection of university programs that prepare educational leaders has many institutions in a precarious position. This situation has resulted in what Hanson (2001) referred to as environmental shock, "…a condition in which changes in an educational system's external environment get seriously ahead of any incremental adaptations [organizations] can make…When organizations are highly institutionalized and inflexible, they become vulnerable to environmental shock" (p. 655). Meyer (1992) argued that when organizations are confronted with fragmentation in the external environment they tend to develop elaborate internal subsystems, mechanisms, and routines in an attempt to introduce a level of enhanced internal stability as a counterbalance to the unpredictability of external events. Educational organizations' structural conformity also is rewarded when these organizations can argue that they are doing what the "best research" indicates, what the professional societies expect (Aldrich, 2000; Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1992).

Professional and trade associations are vehicles for the definition and promulgation of normative rules about organizational and professional behavior. Common expectations, values, codes, and standards about personal and professional behavior are imposed and modeled by universities and other agencies and such mechanisms create a pool of almost interchangeable individuals who occupy similar positions across a range of organizations. These individuals possess a similarity of orientation and disposition that may override variations in tradition and control that might otherwise shape organizational behavior (Perrow, 1974; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). These agencies also act as gatekeepers, determining who gets into the profession and therefore further reinforcing normative expectations and behaviors (Hanson, 2001).

For example, in 1986, the Danforth Foundation began providing for the revitalization of principal preparation programs. The philosophy of the foundation's director sought to modify or eliminate practices that were perceived to be incompatible in the preparation of outstanding practitioners. One of these processes was the elimination of students' isolation in the university setting during graduate study (Weise, 1992). During a five-year period, twenty-two universities across the nation participated in this effort (Cordeiro, Krueger, Park, Restine, & Wilson, 1993). Although communication from the Danforth Foundation did not specify student cohorts for participating institutions in the original program objectives, all of the participating universities adopted a cohort format for their respective programs (Cordeiro, et. al., 1993). Reports from a survey sent to each institution indicated that cohorts were perceived to be highly conducive to principal-training models, mechanisms to ensure program integrity, and providers of curricular coherence. "In addition, student cohorts provided a support system and networking opportunity for participants" (Restine, in Cordeiro, et al., 1993, p.26). The redundant use of cohorts by participating institutions seems to suggest both a normative (e.g., networking, highly conducive for principal training) as well as a mimetic process (e.g., deliberate choice to employ these structures).

Given the similarity of professional behavior and norms, Powell and DiMaggio (1991) also noted that the professionalization of management tends to proceed in tandem with the structuration of organizational fields. It

could be logically asserted then, that the creeping homogenization within the professorate in general, and, the pervasive use of cohorts, in particular (Barnett, et. al., 2000; McCarthy & Kuh, 1997; Scribner & Donaldson, 2001) may be the result of acquisition of structure (Scott, 1987). Acquisition occurs under conditions of uncertainty and in an attempt to maintain legitimacy. It may also be the result of a normative process of management transference (e.g., movement of personnel from one organization to another). We propose acquisition as a plausible explanation because of the recentness and prevalence of student cohorts in these settings. Even though cohorts are perceived to add value and provide program coherence and integrity in leadership programs (Cordeiro, et. al., 1993; Weise, 1992), scant evidence is available that empirically maintains that this structure is effective in preparing leaders. In addition, as Powell and DiMaggio (1991) pointed out "these isomorphic processes can be expected to proceed in the absence of evidence that it increases internal organizational efficiency" (p. 73).

Conclusion

University leadership preparation programs find themselves responding to relentless and pervasive national attention focused on the quality of their programs and their graduates (Young & Petersen, 2002; Levine, 2005; Shulman, et al., 2006). In this paper we pointed to the fact that in times of external turbulence (shock) "organized anarchies" (Cohen, et. al., 1972) fill the void of uncertainty by imposing their own definitions of the best goals, teaching/learning technology, and standards of excellence (Hanson, 2001). One example of this, it could be logically argued, is the ubiquitous implementation of student cohort models in doctoral programs that prepare educational leaders (Barnett, et. al., 2000; Cordeiro, et. al., 1993; Hart & Pounder, 1999; McCarthy & Kuh, 1997; Norton, 1995). The focus of this exploratory inquiry is conceptual. The outcome of this analysis, however, is a range of notable research implications given the unanswered questions that have been generated.

We note that little empirical evidence exists that clearly delineates that the growth in the use of cohorts is the sole result of a coercive processes, or a

mimetic function of institutions within the organizational field. Nor does the literature indicate that the substantial increase in cohort use is solely the result of the normative mechanisms of organizations promoting professional norms and values or seeking external legitimacy. What appears to be evident from our examination of this issue is that student cohorts are likely the result of all three mechanisms, each acting on and within the organizational field in particular ways. Also, we do not claim that neo-institutional factors alone are responsible for the growing use of cohorts. Indeed, as even major proponents of this theoretical perspective admit, environmental adaptation for economic purposes, not just social fitness, also plays a role in organizational adoption of particular structures. Still, we believe our analysis points to the value of neo-institutional theory as a lens for inquiry into this and other isomorphic tendencies in the field.

Our analysis of why cohorts are prevalent and the processes through which their use has grown has raised many additional questions (illustrating, we believe the value of this lens for further inquiry). In Figure 1 the potential relationships among the three mechanisms of coercion, modeling, and norming for the use of cohorts is illustrated. This figure also incorporates the external environmental events, pressures, and shocks that have been addressed in our analysis. Therefore, this figure serves as a framework for future research. It identifies the range of salient factors associated with exploration of this phenomenon. It details questions that can be asked about relationships among these factors. Very importantly, rather than simply focusing on the prevalence of isomorphic organizational structures, it focuses attention on the processes through which these isomorphic structures are achieved (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). It highlights the directionality of anticipated or real pressures, and it draws attention to the result of all these processes – change. Some examples of questions that the present analysis and Figure 1 highlight are the following:

Figure 1: Coercive, Mimetic and Normative Mechanisms in the Use of Cohorts

Professional Organizations (e.g., AASA, NASSP, NAESP, etc.) - Dissatisfaction with the preparation of school leaders.

Articulate dissatisfaction of how school leaders are prepared (shock), formally and informally through organizational networks and sectors discuss alternative means for preparing leaders (generalized threat-coercive).

External Environmental Shifts "Shock" (e.g., expectations of government and public; changes in funding; accountability of schools, teachers, and administrators; alternative certification for school personnel; high-stakes testing, attacks by prominent critics, etc.)

Professions exhibiting similarity to professional counterparts (normative) through professional networks [e.g., use of cohorts] (mimicking).

Universities: Advanced programs, under conditions of uncertainty, weak technology, and ambiguous goals (organized anarchies), seek legitimacy. Social actors are influenced and incorporate structures for new or redesigned preparation programs (acquisition) perceived to be effective, used by institutions that are more prestigious, (mimetic) and more in line with external professional values and norms (normative) to prepare leaders.

Legend

→ = Direction of anticipated or real pressure

△ = Change

1. What is the relationship between external environmental shocks, pressures from professional associations that are dissatisfied with the preparation of school leaders, and isomorphic mechanisms, the qualities of the field logic(s) about cohorts, and sources of isomorphic change?

2. All twenty-two institutions that participated in the Danforth Foundation program adopted student cohort models, although the communication from the project director did not require them to adopt such structures. What process initiated the use of student cohorts in these settings? Why did all of the programs adopt this model? Was quantity and quality of communications among these institutions a contributing factor to this isomorphism? To what extent did "Danforth Institutions" become the models mimicked by other programs, and what processes accounted for these isomorphic pressures and processes?
3. Are there differences in cohort use by different types of institutions? To what extent have programs mimicked those that are perceived to be of higher status and more successful? How are higher status and success defined by those doing the mimicking?
4. To what extent has the educational leadership field modeled preparation programs of other professions, especially those considered to be more prestigious?
5. Research discussing cohorts was minimal until about 1990. What was the impetus for the sudden growth in the adoption of cohorts? Why are they so prevalent in educational leadership doctoral programs today?
6. What is the source of cohorts – is their presence a function of acquisition or other sources and processes?
7. Cohorts do not appear to be an exclusive field logic. What other field logics compete for acceptance within the organizational and professional fields? How strong and deep is the penetration of these other field logics? How have these other field logics developed and been promulgated? Has their penetration followed similar or different processes than those for cohorts?
8. What is the true content of cohorts as a field logic? Is their use based on the premise that they contribute to improved educational leader performance? Or, are they simply a mechanism for use by administrators to effectively organize students and use the limited resources of faculty, time, and money effectively and efficiently?
9. What linkages exist between cohorts as a field logic and other values, beliefs, and conventions of the field?
10. No empirical evidence indicates that student cohorts are the most effective way to prepare educational leaders. Therefore, are students

who participate in student cohorts better leaders than students who do their graduate work in more "traditional programs?"

We offer this framework and these example questions in the spirit of stimulating additional research. As Achilles (1994) pointed out, calls for reform have been made for decades. Yet responses to these warnings have been less than clear and unaccompanied by evidence that the field has succeeded in making a difference. Within this context understanding what the field does and why becomes central to its future. Neo-institutional theory provides a valuable means to contribute to this much-needed understanding.

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Author Biographies

Joe F. Donaldson is Professor of Higher and Continuing Education in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is also assistant director of the University's Statewide Cooperative EdD Program in Educational Leadership. His current research and writing focus on adult undergraduate students in higher education and education for the professions, especially medicine and educational leadership. He has addressed these topics in over ninety publications, including refereed journal articles, books, book chapters, and research reports.

George J. Petersen is a professor and chair of educational leadership at the California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He is also an adjunct professor in the educational leadership and organizational studies program at the University of California Santa Barbara. His research interests have focused on the executive leadership of the district superintendent. This work has primarily focused on superintendent beliefs, roles, and work in the area of instructional leadership, policy decision-making, social influence and the academic success of the district. He has addressed these topics in over fifty publications, including refereed journal articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, commissioned papers and two books. Most recently he co-authored a book with Theodore Kowalski and Lance Fusarelli entitled: Effective Communication for School Administrators: A Necessity in an Information Age. (2007) Rowan and Littlefield Education.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST 2 YEARS OF A DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Programs across the United States and in other countries are re-envisioning and rebuilding their leadership programs (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005). While the changes may have occurred naturally within the context of improving programs, it is also likely that many of the changes have occurred due to criticism leveled at doctoral and other leader preparation programs from various sources. As early as 1987 the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA) criticized preparation programs for a number of deficiencies that included a lack of definition of good educational leadership, as well as insufficient sequence, modern content, and field-based experiences in preparation programs (Milstein & Krueger, 1997).

More recently, Levine (2005) issued a highly negative study of preparation programs in the United States that was widely publicized in the media. Young and colleagues (2005) responded on behalf of organizations such as University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) and National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), and pointed out methodological flaws in Levine's study. They agreed with Levine that educational leadership programs should have high standards and that they must be evaluated strictly, but they argued that drastic reform efforts have been in place for years and restructuring efforts are continuing nation-wide.

Today there are more leadership doctoral programs throughout the country and the world than ever before. For example, the state of Texas has 16 EdD and five PhD programs in educational leadership (http://www.thecb.state.tx.us). Of those 21 programs, at least 10 are less than 10 years old. Additionally, the October 2006 agenda for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) meeting lists university applications for two more doctoral programs. Increasingly, the possession of an earned doctoral degree is required for leadership positions. Yet, Creighton and Parks (2006) noted that there are very few empirical studies focused on doctoral programs. While there appears to be some research regarding the beginning of programs, primarily data about GRE takers, and completion data in the form of earned doctorates, Creighton and Parks have

emphasized that there is little in-between research about what programs are like and the experiences of students during the process of earning the doctoral degree. Within this climate of conflict regarding the quality of doctoral programs and limited empirical knowledge regarding student experiences of doctoral programs, Lamar University, Texas, was granted approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to offer an EdD degree in educational leadership. This paper begins with a brief review of related literature then presents a narrative reflection of the first 2 years of this new program.

Literature Review

The process of change is never without difficulty whether it happens at a university, K-12 school or any other entity (Fullan, 2001). However, dialogue often initiates change which leads to close inspection that is required for existing programs to re-invent themselves. Thus old and even new doctoral programs should be continually involved in a reflective dialogic change process of refinement to establish their own validity. In other words, authentic change is the catalyst for ongoing learning and evaluation that results in improvement for organizations at every level (Starratt, 2004). As older programs are revised and new programs are created, an understanding of the following issues is helpful: admissions, curriculum content, role of PhD or EdD, and the changing cultural climate at the department level created.

Admissions to a Doctoral Program

Young (2006) reviewed the literature on student admissions and found only one empirical study encouraging potential students in applying to a doctoral program. This study focused primarily on the recruitment brochure (Young, Galloway, & Rinehart, 1990). Young (2006) noted that recruitment efforts and sound selection techniques are important to obtain quality doctoral student enrollment. Creighton and Jones (2001) reported that most doctoral programs rely for cohort selection on undergraduate and graduate grade point averages, and scores from a standardized examination. This lack of admissions information led Young (2006) to analyze historical data from one doctoral program involving 203 applicants over a period of 10 years. He found that by using linear equations derived from undergraduate and

graduate GPA and GRE scores paying particular attention to the verbal and quantitative sections, potential applicants' likely success (or lack of success) could be identified.

Curriculum Content

In 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration report criticized administrator preparation programs and among the recommendations suggested that there should be an emphasis on theoretical and clinical knowledge, applied research and supervised practice (Jackson & Kelley, 2001). Over the next 2 decades this criticism has led to closer review of existing programs especially in the areas of knowledge base, clinical experience (field-based internships), and instructional strategies (cohort groups, problem-based learning, issues of equity and democracy) (Donmoyer, Imber & Scheurich, 1995; Milstein, 1993). Originally much of the discussion focused on principal and superintendent preparation programs, which were generally Masters-level and certification programs. Doctoral programs were also increasingly revised (Jackson & Kelley, 2001).

The process of reviewing and reframing new and existing university preparation programs has led to a model identified as scholar practitioner, which emphasizes bridging the gap between theory and practice. Mullen (2005) described scholar practitioner as redefining what an "intellectual is and does," and specifically as someone "who gravitates toward inquiry [to] guide their practical knowing and [to] see the possibilities and limitations of theory in practice" (p. 47). Anderson and Saavedra (2003) pointed out that curriculum focuses on student problem based learning that "[makes] meaning about their social world" (p. 1). According to Starratt (2004), scholar-practitioner programs challenge university professors to become engaged in a dialogue that considers the learning process and the work of educators and results in connecting "more fully and more efficaciously to the human project" (p. 267). In this way professors become "bridge scholars" (p. 265).

Harris (2005) noted that the goal of a scholar practitioner program is transformative in nature, a notion which suggests that these graduate and doctoral programs are situated in studying actual leadership while

consistently engaging in inquiry. This leads to changing understandings of leadership which are reflected in school improvements at all levels.

Role of EdD or PhD

Hart and Pounder (1999) observed that the re-examination of doctoral programs and the role of the traditional dissertation associated with the PhD, but also usually required for the EdD, has brought the discussion of PhD and EdD requirements to the forefront. Young (2006) has suggested that there should be different models for the practitioner EdD and the researcher PhD Milstein (2000) argued that often universities do not "create and conduct programs that differ depending on career goals" (p. 542). He suggested that one reason this may occur is that university faculty are unsure of the difference between the two degree programs. Traditionally, the PhD was for individuals who intended to become researchers or professors while EdD programs were primarily designed to "enable practitioners to expand their knowledge and ability to be transformational leaders" (Milstein, 2000, p. 542). However, Irby and Lunenburg (2006) noted that the differences between the two types of programs in reality are few. At the same time, Bredeson (2006) observed that the PhD prepared practitioners and researchers to bring theory and practice together. He also suggested that it should not be necessary for students to choose one over the other. Yet with the growing number of regional institutions granting doctoral degrees, usually the EdD, the lines have blurred. This is creating a disconnect between the PhD and the EdD, a situation which may still result in challenges for new doctoral programs.

Changing Cultural Climate

Alford, Gill, Marshall, Crocker and Spall (1999) addressed the changing dynamic of new doctoral programs on the university department itself. Traditionally in regional universities especially, the emphasis for faculty had been on service and teaching, with little expectation of scholarly writing or presentations at national meetings. However, with the new EdD program emphasizing a scholar-practitioner model, the emphasis has shifted to that of faculty having a record of scholarship and publications. This shift is required for faculty to teach in the doctoral program and to serve on dissertation committees.

Methodology

Reflective narrative methodology was selected for this study because of the need to articulate and interpret the experiences of implementing a new program. I was not involved with designing this new program and therefore did not participate in the 2 years of meetings during which the Lamar University College of Education designed the program to present to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Instead, I was hired as a core faculty member to teach in the program just prior to the implementation of the program in the fall, 2004. I became director of this new EdD program in educational leadership at the end of the first semester's implementation. In addition to my own reported observations in this paper as an insider researcher, I have utilized faculty meeting minutes, informal discussions with doctoral faculty, personal notes, focus group interviews with students in the program, and end-of year student evaluations to address the multiple realities expressed within the context of a new program (Stake, 1995).

Data were analyzed by the researcher and a graduate assistant and then coded into emergent categories developed through constant comparative method (Cresswell, 1998). This resulted in the categories that are reflected in the discussion that follows. In order to strengthen reliability, core faculty members read and gave input on the reflective narrative. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final report. The experiences discussed in this paper have been issues of discussion among the doctoral faculty. This has encouraged dialogue leading to program improvement even in the very early stages of implementation.

Setting for a New Doctoral EdD Program

A new doctoral program (EdD) was approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in 2005. The program is housed in the Educational Leadership and Counseling Department at Lamar University, although it was created to have equal representation by faculty from all four departments in the College of Education (COE): Educational Leadership and Counseling, Pedagogy, Kinesiology, and Family Consumer Sciences. The program was created as a 60-hour credit cohort model and designed to be completed in eight semesters. Students take 12 hours of

Dissertation, 12 hours of Research, 24 hours of Core classes that include leadership, ethics, change, learning theory, cultural issues and a required field-based internship or action problem. Two 12-hour cognates, which emphasize multiculturalism/diversity and effective schools, were approved. Although the program has a practitioner emphasis, a formal dissertation is the culminating experience. The expected student population was P-12 educators who were teachers, counselors, administrators.

Student Admissions

Reflecting on the issue of student admissions, we have seen three major issues in this area. The first is that of the student admissions process. The original THECB proposal limited acceptance to four traditional means: transcript grades, letters of recommendation, GRE scores, and a personal interview. This was the primary basis for student admissions for Cohort I. For Cohort 2, we began to experiment with other qualifiers that included current position, kinds of leadership experiences, length of experience, awards received, papers published, and presentations made. Consequently, we created a rubric that incorporated all 10 of these qualifiers and assigned points to each. This rubric has been valuable in our admissions process. We evaluate each application using the rubric in a screening process that determines who will be interviewed. After the interview, we total applicant points and meet as a faculty to determine whom to invite to join the cohort. For example, the second cohort had 38 applicants in the spring, 2006. Using the rubric as a screen and a guide, we identified 30 applicants to interview and accepted 22 for cohort 2.

During the spring, 2006 of the second year, we began reviewing the 47 applications for Cohort 3. Once again, the rubric was helpful in identifying 25 potential students. We accepted 15 students. Cohort 3 which began the program in the fall, 2006, is also the most diverse, with 15 students, 6 of whom are African American. We believe enlarging the scope of qualifiers in the rubric to include more specific leadership experiences contributed to a more diverse cohort.

The second issue that has occurred in reviewing this new doctoral program has been that our student population is different from that expected. The original emphasis had been K-12 and it was expected that most students

would be teachers, counselors and administrators. While there has been an interest from teachers and counselors, the primary interest has come from administrators (assistant principals, principals, central office individuals, superintendents). Surprisingly, unexpected interest has germinated from individuals at the community college level and even at the higher education level working in administrative capacities, such as student affairs director. In fact, in the application process for Cohort 3, 16 of the 47 applicants were community college individuals. This process has led to a change in the doctoral leadership focus from P-12 to P-16 and the recent approval by the Board of Regents for a third 12-hour cognate in higher education. At this point in our students' careers, all are practitioners. Now that we are beginning the third year of the program, students are being promoted and job assignments are changing. Students who initially entered the program because they wanted to earn a doctorate so they could become a regional service center director, principal, or superintendent, for example, are already re-examining their career goals to include perhaps teaching practitioners at the university level one day.

Changing Cultural Climate

Service and teaching have been the guiding parameters of tenure and promotion at this regional university. Changing to a doctoral culture, which mandates scholarship and requires that professors publish in refereed journals and make national presentations, is a tremendous change. This change has limited the participation and involvement of COE faculty who are not core doctoral faculty in teaching in the program.

Except for faculty hired specifically for the doctoral program, other potential COE faculty members already have full teaching loads. Consequently, it is difficult for them to be released from these obligations to involve them in teaching in the program. There has also been reluctance on the part of other COE faculty to teach in the program since it meets every other weekend. While this is ideal for our full-time working students, faculty members are often constrained to give up parts of nine weekends a semester.

Increasingly, we have begun inviting COE faculty members to co-teach with core faculty. As we have become more familiar with other COE

faculty members' areas of interest, we have extended invitations for them to join specific classes to share their knowledge, even if just for one session. In this way, opportunities are increased for other faculty to have doctoral teaching experience. Involving other faculty in the program also helps students to become more familiar with the extended university faculty, which increases the likelihood of these teachers becoming involved in doctoral student research and dissertations.

Curriculum and Instruction

Faculty new to teaching in a doctoral program must often undergo a major change in teaching style from that of basic mastery of concepts to one that is more constructive, exploratory, inquiry-based, open-ended and reflective (Alford, Gill, Marshall, Crocker, & Spall, 1999). The balance between teaching curriculum theory and embedding these principles in assignments that relate to practice is often a challenge for faculty.

Another aspect of curriculum is that the original designations of the cognates were multiculturalism/diversity and effective schools. Initially, there was an expectation that "teacher types" in the program would select multiculturalism/diversity and that administrator-types would select Effective Schools. Instead almost all of the students have selected multiculturalism/diversity topics as a way to achieve an effective school. Thus electives offered in the multiculturalism/diversity have grown, while those courses in the cognate Effective School have largely been untaught.

Need for Collaboration

In the first year of the program, faculty created syllabi independent of one another. Because all of the students in our cohorts are busy practitioners, a major criticism that students made is that too often major papers became due on the same dates. Additionally, there was little connection or collaboration in course requirements as professors often worked in isolation. Core faculty members have responded to this concern by meeting regularly to discuss syllabi and, when possible, interrelating activities and assignments across courses.

Preparation for Dissertation

Most of the students in our programs do not come with a graduate background that has been steeped in extensive writing. Therefore, it is important that students have the experience of American Psychological Association (APA) formatted writing in their classes and of building a body of literature research in their specific area of interest (Irby & Lunenburg, 2006). Finding a way to relate formal writing assignments to the work of practitioners is important. For this reason, doctoral core faculty have increased our efforts for students to have academic, scholarly writing experiences that bridge their work experience as a component of each course they take. For example, in my Cultural Influence course, which students take in the second semester, Cohort I members were asked to research an area of interest and write a literature review on that topic. Now, when I teach that class, I ask students to think of an area of inquiry that relates both to their practice and to a special area of interest that might become a dissertation interest. Then, in other classes, we ask them to explore different aspects of this issue, thus building a body of literature that investigates their inquiry from a variety of different perspectives.

Changed Understandings of Leadership

At the end of the first and second years, faculty conducted evaluations of the program. Among the issues we explored were questions that focused on how student understandings of leadership were changing. Consistently, the students shared examples of how their understandings had changed. One student commented that, because of the cultural influences class, he had a new appreciation of what students experienced outside of school. This caused him to create programs in his school which involved training for parents. Another student wrote about how the process of conducting an equity audit in one of the classes was valuable in understanding data available to school districts. He shared this study with his school board and it resulted in a grant that emphasized culturally proficient teaching. Another student commented that she was amazed that she had come this far in her education program and not heard of Brazilian educator, Paolo Freire, and liberationist philosophies of education. Yet another student noted that when she attended a recent seminar that featured national speakers, she felt that she knew as much, if not more, about the topic, than the speakers. Why?— because of the reading she had done in the doctoral program.

Conclusion

The scope of this chapter has not identified all of the experiences involved in creating a new doctoral program in educational leadership. Yet the process of reflecting on our experiences in these 2 years has exposed many of the issues that have challenged us during this time. While faculty members involved with this doctoral program have not yet found solutions for all of the challenges identified that included admissions, the changing cultural climate, curriculum and instruction, the need for collaboration and others, there is considerable ongoing dialogue. We are talking with faculty at other universities, we are listening to our students and their ideas about on-going program improvement, and we are researching the literature to find other possible ideas and strategies that will result in a successful educational leadership program. The process of change is alive and well, even in a brand new program. In our new educational leadership doctoral program at Lamar University, the process of reflection focuses not on re-vitalizing an existing program but instead on the ongoing process of continually refining to build a strong program for leaders.

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Author Biography

Sandra Harris, Ph.D. is an associate professor and Director of the Center for Doctoral Studies in Educational Leadership at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. Dr. Harris primarily specializes in the educational areas of doctoral leadership learning, creating welcoming achieving school climates K-12, and effective practices for leaders K-16. She is editor of the refereed journal NCPEA Education Leadership Review. Her most recent books are Changing Mindsets of Educational Leaders (2005, Rowman & Littlefield Education), Best Practices of Award-Winning Secondary Principals (2006 Corwin Press), and The Challenges of No Child Left Behind (2007, with Jane Irons, Rowman & Littlefield Education).

Doctoral Program Issues: Accreditation of Programs

While most professors and higher education administrators have responded favorably to accreditation processes, they agree that the process has some negative connotations such as: (a) the amount of time needed to maintain accreditation and prepare for and conduct self-studies, (b) curricular changes, (c) the many labor-intensive tasks related to accreditation, and (d) expenses incurred (Schmidt, 1999). Despite these negative issues, most recently, accreditation may have become more critical as the discipline of educational leadership/administration has been faced with public attacks about preparation programs at both the doctoral and masters levels. At issue has also been the challenge for scholars to straddle a crevasse regarding the purpose and intent of doctoral programs.

Participation and completion of a doctoral program is not only a valuable experience, but the degree is almost necessary in today's society for professional advancement within schools and certainly in order to obtain a position in the professoriate. Stakeholders of such doctoral programs, including students, state higher education coordinating boards, school boards, public school administrators, and university faculty demand quality based on a set of standards. Therefore, some type of standards-based accreditation process is undisputable for doctoral programs since students must be assured that the program from which they will receive their degree, whether it is a PhD or an EdD, traditional or distance education, or a combination of the two, is one of quality and meets a set of established standards.

In this chapter we (a) review some of the main concerns about leadership preparation programs recently expressed by critic, Arthur Levine, and some points from the rebuttal produced by the University Council for Educational Administration, Division A and the Special Interest Group, Teaching in Educational Administration, from the American Educational Research Association, and the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, (b) present the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards and relate them to recent debates about types and purposes of doctoral programs in general, and (c) make

recommendations for a profession-based accrediting process of doctoral programs in educational leadership or administration.

Critique and Response: Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

Nearly two years ago Levine (2005) presented his stirring report, Educating School Leaders, and raised a hearty response from the leading organizations in educational administration representing a large constituency of researchers and scholars from a variety of institutions of higher education (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005). Of first import, Young and colleagues pointed out severe methodological flaws in Levine's research which would draw questions as to the relevance and applicability of his report at all. We, too, suggest that this tends to make Levine's heralded report only reverberations without solid arguments.

Given the national press of the Levine report, it was imperative that Young and colleagues, representing the field, react to his discussions of the necessity of high standards for leadership programs. Young and colleagues agreed that programs should have high standards and voiced that they also must be evaluated in the strictest manner, furthering the concept that weak programs should either be improved or should cease to exist. They reported that there was ample evidence that reform efforts have been taking place in programs across the country and that the schools of education are leading the way in reform efforts and setting high standards. Thus, they disagreed with Levine's assumptions and his evidence that current programs should be eradicated. In fact, Young and the authors, with their constant contact with myriads of program faculty around the country, found his statements to be dated and indicated that

…the report overlooks the aggressive and complex changes underway in leadership preparation programs. It leaves the impression that efforts to improve leadership programs are non-existent or barely underway. In fact, across the nation, many scholars, policy makers, policy analysts, school leaders, professional organizations, and foundations have been addressing this need for years. Such experts have already raised concerns about ineffective preparation programs and have promoted drastic reform and restructuring of educational leadership preparation. (p.1)

They even noted that improvement efforts have been brought about particularly by states, organizations, foundations, and, we add, the federal government, and that improvements have actually occurred in the programs that train school leaders. Young and colleagues reported that apparently "… these efforts were not known to Levine's alumni survey sample, most of whom attended preparation programs before many of these current reforms were underway" (p. 1).

Reporting many standards movements at the organizational and state levels, Young and colleagues' report noted that the efforts toward accreditation of preparation programs of school leaders was ratcheted up in 2002. This occurred when the standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a consortium of 32 educational agencies and 13 education administration associations, were integrated into the NCATE/Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC)[footnote] Program Standards for evaluating leadership preparation programs for national accreditation. We point out that these standards, though admirable, presently are used for the accreditation of two preparation certification programs—building level and district level administrators, but they are not specific to doctoral programs in educational administration.

The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) is an affiliation of four administrator groups (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development -ASCD, National Association of Elementary School Principals -NAESP, National Association of Secondary School Principals -NASSP, and National Policy Board for Educational Administration - NPBEA). It is authorized by NCATE to review preparation programs for educational leaders using standards developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) which is made up of nine professional associations including the American Association of Colleges for Teachers Education (AACTE), American Educational Research Association (AERA), Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), National School Board

Association (NCBA), and the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA).

Young and colleagues indicated that quality has been supported for more than 50 years as UCEA has worked to ensure that its membership criteria support quality leadership preparation. The 73 doctoral granting institutions that make up UCEA, have committed to the following standards:

• Program faculty identify, develop, and promote relevant knowledge for the leadership field.

• Programs involve a critical mass of full-time leadership faculty members, who exhibit excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service.

• Programs collaborate with practitioners, and other stakeholders in candidate selection,program planning, teaching, and field internships.

• Programs collaborate with scholars, practitioners, and other stakeholders to inform program content, promote diversity within their program and the field, and develop sites for clinical practice and applied research.

• Programs are conceptually coherent, aligned with quality leadership standards, informed by current scholarship, and incorporate best practices in leadership preparation.

• Programs engage in on-going programmatic evaluation and enhancement.

• Programs include concentrated periods of study and supervised clinical practice in settings that provide an opportunity to work with diverse groups of students and teachers.

• Programs are characterized by systematic recruitment and admission plans that use multiple sources of evidence and purposive recruitment of a high quality and diverse applicant pool.

• Programs maintain systematic efforts to assist students in placement and career advancement.

• Program faculty participate in professional development programs for educational leaders, in cooperation with professional associations and other stakeholders.

• Programs offer regular professional development for leadership faculty to enhance their skills in leadership preparation and research methods. (www.ucea.org)

Furthermore they averred "that the above programs standards, in conjunction with quality leadership standards (e.g., ISLLC), form the basis of effective leadership preparation and would recommend their widespread adoption" (p. 2).

One View of Accreditation Standards with NCATE and Commentaries on EdD's and PhD's

NCATE, a national accrediting body for 623 colleges of education[footnote] and authorized by the U.S. Department of Education, determines which schools, colleges, and departments of education meet rigorous national standards in preparing teachers and other school specialists for the classroom. NCATE accreditation is at the unit level and does not lie with the individual programs. Decisions regarding the approval of specific programs are made by specialty professional associations (SPA) (NCATE, 2006).
100 more colleges are seeking NCATE accreditation.

NCATE has indicated that if a program is approved by a state in which the state's program review process has been approved by the relevant SPA, that program will be nationally recognized. In the case of the educational administration program, principal (building) and superintendent (district) certification, the approval is made by the ELCC.

It is both notable and disconcerting that the NCATE website makes more mention of teachers or school specialists and administrators in terms of certification or licensure, than it does the advanced program-- doctoral. This is one of the programs under its auspices and should be highlighted equally as well as such certification programs. For example, NCATE has as its mission-- NCATE is the teaching profession's mechanism to help to

establish high quality teacher, specialist, and administrator preparation. Through the process of professional accreditation of schools, colleges, and departments of education, NCATE works to make a difference in the quality of teaching, teachers, school specialists, and administrators. NCATE believes every student deserves a caring, competent, and highly qualified teacher.

Further, the NCATE website, when sharing general information about the importance of accreditation that accreditation of schools of education, indicates: (a) that the school underwent rigorous external review by professionals, (b) that performance of a teacher candidate in the program has been thoroughly assessed before he or she is recommended for licensure, and (c) that programs meet standards set by the teaching profession at large. NCATE states that-- doctoral programs must be included in the NCATE review only if such programs prepare personnel to work in P-12 schools. Most institutions include only those doctoral programs in the accreditation process that prepare school leaders, particularly school superintendents.

Of importance to our discussion in this paper is the point made by Young and colleagues that Levine commingled principal and superintendent preparation certificate programs with degree programs. They noted that "graduate institutions often perform both functions—they provide degrees and prepare individuals for certification. …Throughout his report, he [Levine] uses leadership program and principal program interchangeably, despite the likelihood that they may be different" (p. 2). We believe NCATE might commingle certification programs for "specialists and administrators" with doctoral programs, PK-12. For doctoral programs emphasizing PK-12, there may or may not be the attachment of certification with the degree program; therefore, such programs cannot be automatically commingled. It is true that NCATE will accredit the units that have Doctorates of Education (EdD) or Doctorates of Philosophy (PhD) that deal with preparing professionals to remain in schools.

One would surmise that the EdD programs within the unit would be reviewed by NCATE since it is the intent of the EdD generally to be geared toward educational practice and applied research in the field in most cases.

However, there appears to be a very small gap in reality between two types of doctoral programs, the EdD and the PhD, and the intent as they are offered by educational leadership departments across the country. Because the small gaps exist between the two types of programs and because the intent between the two is fuzzy in most cases at best, it is clear that no assumptions can be made as to the type of doctoral program[footnote] that would come under the auspices of NCATE accreditation. Indeed, there is controversy in the field as evidenced by recent work from Townsend (2002) who wrote about differences between EdD's and PhD's and called for the consideration of the EdD as a professional degree; from Young (2006) who proposed differing models for the EdD and PhD to kindle dialogue around the topic; from Bredeson (2006) who proposed the PhD as a preparation for both practitioners and researchers which would bring theory and practice together rather than having an individual choose one over the other; and from Guthrie (2006) who indicated that today's world calls for the dichotomizing of the degrees due to the specialized skill sets which should be taught in one program or the other.

When we write that the program comes under NCATE, it is our meaning that the program is under the unit/college.

Over 10 years ago, Nelson and Coorough (1994) found few differences between the actual research conducted for EdD and PhD dissertations. This actually becomes one of the questions related to doctoral programs for those institutions that have an EdD program only which is equal in rigor and substance to the graduate programs that offer PhD's and with dissertations that compare to PhD dissertations in educational administration around the country. In our recent review (Irby & Lunenburg, 2006) of research of educational administration/leadership dissertations nationally and internationally on ProQuest UMI (University Microfilms) over the past two years, there were 75 EdD dissertations and 45 PhD dissertations in educational leadership. EdD students actually conducted 12% quantitative studies, while PhD students conducted 4% quantitative studies. Additionally, all dissertations in both program types were virtually centered on similar themes of leadership and none involved experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Therefore, from a cursory investigation of 2004 and 2005 dissertations, it appears that nothing much has changed in the 10 years since the Nelson and Coorough analysis.

Many of the EdD programs, particularly in Texas, were approved based on the requirements for new doctoral programs in education from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. We surmise that some of those EdD programs are preparing students to not only continue in the PK-12 practice, but also to move into the professoriate in higher education—similar to the option the PhD afforded Bredeson (2006) and others. As Bredeson indicated the combined practitioner/researcher program offered alternative movement from the school administrator to the professoriate. We believe it is very difficult in today's world of NCLB-driven research and accountability to not be a practitioner who also knows research and how to implement it. For example, even the Early Reading First programs must include exacting evaluation research. Additionally, if university professors, who need to be able to conduct experimental or quasi-experimental research in schools, come knocking at the door of the school, and the principal, the central office personnel, or the superintendent do not have an understanding of the research base, then a chaotic situation could erupt. It is not because the professor would be ruthless or unethical, rather, in schools, with children, with parents, with teachers—terrain must be traversed carefully with research. Trust must be built and knowledge and the language of research is a basis for trust.

Based on the debate in the field, we believe at this point, the question will remain—just because a program is a PhD, or just because a program is an EdD, does not make it eligible or ineligible for NCATE review. When a similar question about the accreditation of doctoral programs was posed to NCATE—the response by Art Wise, at a recent NCATE Conference in Arlington, VA, was that we should look at the preponderance of where our graduates are located—in positions of professor or in PK-12 administrative service. He intimated that would tell us what type program we had—the preparation of practitioners or the preparation of researchers. With that consideration, if a university has practitioner-oriented doctoral programs then it would come under review, so we call a question – In what ways can the NCATE standards be applied appropriately for doctoral programs that prepare students to serve in PK-12?

Following, we explore the overall unit NCATE Standard 1[footnote] as an example and apply it to the advanced program, doctoral.

Note. This is the overall unit NCATE standard that we use at this point, not the ELCC standards.

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

Application to doctoral program. The Target of Standard 1 for other school personnel is as follows: Candidates for other professional school roles critique and are able to reflect on their work within the context of student learning. They establish educational environments that support student learning, collect and analyze data related to student learning, and apply strategies for improving student learning within their own jobs and schools. Components of the NCATE explanation provided are as follows: Candidates preparing to work in schools as other school personnel demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to meet professional, state, and institutional standards. (Professional standards may be aligned with UCEA standards outlined previously.)

Under NCATE, candidates in these graduate programs should develop the ability to apply research and research methods. Doctoral programs would have ample applicability in this area where students in such programs are solving real problems. Candidates also develop knowledge of learning, the social and cultural context in which learning takes place, and practices that support learning in their professional roles. Doctoral programs would be expected to have courses related to instructional/learning theory, societal/cultural issues, and leadership theory/practices.

NCATE indicates that candidates might assess the school environment by collecting and analyzing data on student learning as it relates to their professional roles and developing positive environments supportive of student learning. Doctoral programs would be expected to maintain a course on program evaluation. Institutions must submit program documentation, including candidate performance data, which responds to professional

standards for national and/or state review prior to and during the on-site visit. Doctoral programs do not necessarily have state or national standards; however, it is usual for state higher education units to have approved a doctoral program with its own goals and standards. Therefore, it is those local doctoral goals that potentially could be used for the review; that may include research and the types of research as well as internships. The program documentation will include performance assessment data collected internally by the unit and external data such as results on state licensing tests and other assessments. Many doctoral programs do not have a certification connected to them. In this case outcome data, comprehensive/qualifying examinations, or competencies would be the type data that could be gathered for documentation. Outcome data might include, but are not limited to, what promotions the candidates have received while participating in the program and the campus or district ranking before and after the candidate was hired in the position, dissertation competitions, numbers of publications by candidates, and reviews of doctoral dissertations by outside professionals.

Profession-based Accrediting Process of Educational Leadership Doctoral Programs

In this paper we are proposing a reconsideration of how doctoral programs in educational leadership/administration undergo accreditation, particularly with NCATE. Our proposal does not exclude the doctoral programs within the NCATE process review for the unit. Rather, it makes a finite distinction between the doctoral program and all other programs for certification. When the NCATE Board of Examiner team reviews the online submissions and then comes in to review the unit, a thorough appraisal of the doctoral program cannot physically be done under such circumstances, and furthermore, there may or may not be individuals who have extensive experience teaching, mentoring, and directing dissertations in educational administration/leadership doctoral programs in their respective universities. We propose the educational leadership/administration professional organizations, through the vehicle of ELCC, establish a process for reviewing doctoral programs. This would place the review at the professional organization oversight level even more so than it is currently

under the ELCC. It appears that other disciplines have taken this route such as middle school specialty and educational technology.

The process could include reviewers who have experience specifically working in and with educational leadership/administration doctoral programs that are targeted to PK-12 and those who have chaired dissertations. The established NCATE standards modified for doctoral programs, just as they have been specified for the middle school discipline and educational technology, could also be tailored for educational leadership/administration doctoral programs. A specific format could be developed by a committee of scholars and practitioners who have earned such a degree. The format selected for a report would need to do justice to the doctoral program which should be about, of course, producing better leaders, but also as a primary function of the doctorate itself, extending knowledge by exploring, investigating, and contemplating issues for PK-12 programs, students, teachers, and leaders. By some means the programs should have the ability to report how experimentation and investigation occur that also results in a deeper level of understanding and interpretation of research by the candidates. How do the candidates discover new techniques or models of leadership, teaching, or learning? How are the results applied and used? Are any new products, theories, or models developed and how are those theories or paradigms or products (programs) validated? How does the research throughout the program contribute to the field? These are some basic questions that should be answered within the development of the proposed review of doctoral programs under the ELCC.

Recent Discussions at Plenary of UCEA

In November, 2006, the UCEA Plenum met in San Antonio, Texas, and discussed the very issue of accreditation of doctoral programs and the function of UCEA itself. The discussions were situated around the question, What are the purposes of accreditation? Michelle Young, Executive Director of UCEA (Irby, verbal communication, January 28, 2007) indicated the following responses, as not her particular views, but those of the plenum. The plenum is comprised of professors appointed by deans of education from member institutions and represents the voices of approximately 80 doctoral granting institutions. Young stated that when the

plenum discussed accreditation related to NCATE and ELCC that there were 15 general comments, questions, or concerns, and they were as follows:

1. It is unclear what they [NCATE] want [in terms of reviewing doctoral progrqams, other than that which relates to certifiation within a program].

2. The NCATE process seems bureaucratic and compliance-oriented.

3. The NCATE process is just paperwork.

4. It is an artificial process--it does not reflect what we do [in doctoral programs].

5. NCATE can be useful, particularly the cross linkages between programs.

6. It is really a stretch for NCATE to be looking at doctoral programs; this is where UCEAs should definitely come in.

7. NCATE can provide leverage [for any needed changes at the university level].

8. [ISLLC/ELCC] did provide us with a set of national standards.

9. NCATE is negatively affecting our programs [not explained].

10. UCEA could influence the ELCC process politiclly through its national network.

11. UCEA should take a stand on this issue.

12. We, the professionals within doctoral programs, need to influence the ELCC and NCATE process so that reviews are relevant and staffed by appropriate members.

13. NCATE's teacher educators shouldn't be evaluating our (educational leadership) doctoral programs.

14. ELCC standards should include a standard that focuses on what professors do (teaching, research and scholarship) and the contribution of each to efective preparation of doctoral candidates.

Young indicated the plenum was both positive and negative about UCEA taking on a role of accrediting doctoral programs. She stated that concerns were raised related to the need for establishing standards for such programs and in that, there may be as one member stated, "an over-Americanization of UCEA," because UCEA is an international organization. Members also expressed other concerns related to doubling the work in reference to conducting ELCC reviews, NCATE reviews, SACS reviews, etc. Young, in consideration of standards, reminded us that there are UCEA program standards for membership as follows. Programs under consideration for membership in UCEA undergo an external review, internal review, review by the UCEA Board, and a vote from the Plenum based on the following 11 standards.

1. Faculty within preparation programs should make significant efforts to identify, develop, and promote relevant knowledge focused on the essential problems of schooling, leadership and administrative practice.

2. The preparation program should involve a critical mass of full-time tenure-track faculty members (typically five or more) whose appointments are in the department in which educational leaders are educated and who exhibit excellence in scholarship, teaching and service in educational leadership. A majority of educational leadership coursework must be taught by these full-time faculty.

3. The preparation program should make use of an advisory board of educational leadership stakeholders and involve leadership practitioners in program planning, teaching, and field internships.

4. Preparation programs should engage in collaborative relationships with other universities, school districts, professional associations, and other appropriate agencies to inform program content, promote diversity within the preparation program and the field, and generate sites for clinical study, field residency, and applied research.

5. The preparation program should be conceptually coherent and clearly aligned with some quality leadership standards, informed by current scholarship on the essential problems o schooling, leadership and administrative practice, and should make use of research-based, best practices in leadership preparation. In particular, the content of the preparation program should address problems of practice including leadership for student learning and diversity. Also, the processes of the preparation program should be based on adult learning principles.

6. The preparation program should engage in on-going programmatic evaluation and enhancement.

7. The preparation program should include concentrated periods of study and supervised clincial practice in settings that enable leadership candidates an opportunity to work with diverse groups of students and teachers.

8. The preparation program should be characterized by systematic, written recruitment and admission plans that rely on multiple sources of evidence and show deliberate efforts to attract applicants who demonstrate leaderhip potentil with particular attention given to increasing diversity within the program.

9. The preparation program should develop and maintain systematic efforts to assist all students in professional placement and career advancement.

10. The preparation program faculty should participate in the development, delivery, and evaluation of systematic professional development programs for educational leaders, in cooperation with appropriate professional associations and other educational and social agencies.

11. The preparation program should offer regular professional development for program faculty to enhance their skills in leadership preparation, research methods, and other content.

In addition to these 11 standards, the UCEA program review matrix in Appendix A, provides a comprehensive review system in which programs must provide evidence of the standards. The standards and matrix were provided via the conversation with Michelle Young. We consider the UCEA

standards and review matrix a serious contender for reviewing or even accrediting doctoral programs overall and providing feedback for improvement, particularly in light of a recent ELCC/NCATE review of a doctoral program conducted by one of the authors.

Doctoral programs reviewed by ELCC/NCATE appear to be a certification programs for the superintendency. Doctoral programs that come under the ELCC review and that have as the main focus-- superintendency certification programs, particularly within the EdD programs, appear to be simple "training" programs. Arthur Levine, in Educating School Leaders, argued that such EdD programs need to be eliminated and replaced with effective masters degree programs for placing educational administrators and should be considered their terminal degree. He argued that the doctorate should be reserved for more academic engagements. It is this case, the case of the argument for more academic engagements that we agree. Young differentiated the EdD and the PhD. Having the EdD as a superintendent certification program would certainly differentiate it from the PhD. However, for some programs, as stated previously, it is required by a state higher education board to offer only EdD programs as opposed to PhD programs in name only. If EdD programs maintain comparable rigor of a PhD program and are not simply certification training programs that include some form of an action research thesis/dissertation, then those programs should not fall under the scrutiny of ELCC. In fact, ELCC would not even approve many EdD programs under its current guidelines for district level certification reviews. The goals and local standards of many of the programs do not fit within the building or district level reviews conducted by ELCC as it currently conducts the reviews[footnote], so the NCATE overarching standards become the critical benchmarks for these programs as a part of the unit.
We are not intimating that the ELCC review is not rigorous or worthy of certification programs; rather, we are suggesting an additional component be added to the ELCC to review doctoral programs.

Concluding Remarks

When it was recognized that NCATE would be reviewing doctoral programs, many were concerned and remain concerned under the present

conditions—not that the program should not be reviewed, nor that accreditation is not an important and critical matter. Doctoral programs seem to take a back seat to principal and superintendent certification. Additionally, the question is still nagging as to the type of program that should be reviewed. We understand the response by Wise regarding NCATE and doctoral programs, but the field itself has yet to resolve the basic question of what the intent of each program should be and now—one more question—should it be left to the university as to the intent or should it be a national one-size-fits-all doctoral program. Ultimately, it is hopeful that a dialogue can begin so that doctoral programs in educational administration/leadership can be given equal ranking to that of the certification programs that go under review by the SPA, ELCC, or that another entity, such as UCEA, as a member of the NPBEA, which is a member of ELCC, can take a bigger lead in reviewing and recommending approval toward accreditation of doctoral programs to NCATE.

Click Here to view Appendix A

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Author Biographies

Beverly J. Irby, EdD, is a professor and chair of the Educational Leadership and Counseling Department at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. She also serves as a domain editor for the NCPEA CONNEXIONS Knowledge Base. She has authored or co-authored more than 100 articles and books and has garnered over $15,000,000 for the professional development of teachers, improved instruction for students, and research in the area of bilingual education in Texas. She was named the Willystine Goodsell Award Winner for 2005 by the Research on Women and Education Special Interest Group, American Education Research Association and also holds the Margaret Montgomery Leadership Award awarded by the Texas Council of Women School Executives. Most recently, she was given the highest honor by the Suburban Houston Association of Bilingual Education for her service to bilingual education, the Diana Marion Garcia Distinguished Service Award.

Fred C. Lunenburg is the Jimmy N. Merchant Scholar in Education at Sam Houston State University. Prior to moving to the university, he served as a teacher, principal, and superintendent of schools. He has authored or co-authored more than 100 articles and books, including The Principalship: Vision to Action (Thomson/Wadsworth, 2006), Educational Administration: Concepts and Practices, 4th ed. (Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004), Shaping the Future (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), The Changing World of School Administration (Scarecrow Press, 2002), and High Expectations: An Action Plan for Implementing Goals 2000 (Corwin, 2000).

INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

As seen in an earlier chapter, there is variation in the structure and content of doctoral programs in educational leadership. Some of the features of these programs might be considered innovative by the more conservative. This chapter will discuss two innovations that have been developed and implemented in a collaborative doctoral program offered by Southeastern Louisiana University and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. These innovations include: The Action Research Practicum and The Qualifying Paper.

The Action Research Practicum

With the emphasis on the improvement of educational outcomes following No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and similar calls for educational improvements, an important research question is "What works and what does not work?" While traditional research methodologies may be used to answer these questions, there is another alternative: Action Research. Dick (1999) describes action research as

A family of research methodologies which pursue action (or change) and research (or understanding) at the same time. In most of its forms it does this by 1. using a cyclic or spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection and 2. in the later cycles, continuously refining methods, data and interpretation in the light of the understanding developed in the earlier cycles. It is thus an emergent process which takes shape as understanding increases; it is an iterative process which converges towards a better understanding of what happens. In most of its forms it is also participative (among other reasons, change is usually easier to achieve when those affected by the change are involved) and qualitative. (p. 1)

O'Brien (1998) states that action research is known by many other names, including participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, and contextual action research, but all are variations on a theme. Put simply, action research is "learning by doing" - a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again. While this is the

essence of the approach, there are other key attributes of action research that differentiate it from common problem-solving activities that we all engage in every day. A succinct definition is,

Action research...aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. Thus, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded as a desirable direction. Accomplishing this twin goal requires the active collaboration of researcher and client, and thus it stresses the importance of co-learning as a primary aspect of the research process. (O'Brien, 1998)

The collaborative doctoral program developed in Louisiana involves a blending of theory and practice through the use of both content courses, for the development of skills and knowledge, and practicum courses, which include action research-oriented field based projects applied to problems identified in the student's home organizations. The action research project(s) culminate in project reports for inclusion in their doctoral program portfolio. These action research projects may focus on one topic (possibly their dissertation topic), or they may conduct action research on different topics. Because this particular degree program is intended to produce practitioners who are capable of intensive and responsive research to enhance the academic process to which they are affiliated, such a rigorous experience is appropriate. The intended outcome of these practicum experiences is practitioners with increased administrative, analytical and problem solving skills. The action research oriented practicum experience supplements, but does not replace, the dissertation research process which is another outcome of the doctoral degree program.

The action research requirement of the doctoral program consists of three field-based Practicum Experiences for a total of 3 Credit Hours with the following components:

Practicum I—Action Research

Practicum II—Organizational Analysis & Problem Solving

Practicum III—Implementation & Administration of Organizational Improvements

These practicum courses are spread over the three year period when the student is taking the core courses of the program. One of the practicum courses is taken each year. This approach allows ample time for program design and implementation as well as reflection. Note that the practicum course starts after the student has taken the introductory research design course, and concurrent with the "Writing for Research" course and the Qualifying Paper described below. Note that this is only one model for the components of the action research projects; the content of these components may also be incorporated in one or more of the courses of the doctoral program. The components for the practicum courses are as follow.

Doctoral Practicum I—Introduction to Action Research

In the Doctoral Practicum I course, students design an Action Research Project with a focus on their own area of inquiry. Topics to be covered include:

1. Understanding Action Research,
2. Deciding on an Area of Focus,
3. Reviewing the Literature,
4. Creating a Research Plan,
5. Data Collection Techniques,
6. Data Collection Considerations,
7. Analyzing and Interpreting Data,
8. Action Planning for Educational Change, and
9. Commence action research project if possible.

Doctoral Practicum II—Organizational Analysis & Problem Solving

In this second phase of the practicum experience, students will design, implement, evaluate and present results from the action research project that they have developed in Practicum I. Topics to be covered in this practicum include:

1. Organizational Analysis methodology

2. Theoretical concepts in organization theory
3. Dynamics and complexity of organizational analysis
4. Specific problems of using organizational analysis for problem solving.

Doctoral Practicum III—Implementation & Administration of Organizational Improvements

In this third phase of the practicum, students complete the design, implementation and evaluation of their action research project, and present their results. Topics to be covered include:

1. Organizational Improvement – implementation strategies
2. Applying concepts of organization theory
3. Analyzing Action Research
4. Dynamics and complexity of improving an organization
5. Specific problems of implementing organizational improvements.

The Qualifying Paper*

In the research course sequence of the collaborative doctoral program offered by Southeastern Louisiana University and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the second course in the sequence is entitled "Writing for Research". This course is designed to prepare the doctoral student to engage in scholarly inquiry and writing, and to prepare them to conduct their action research project and dissertation. Topics include refining writing style, plagiarism and copyrighting, using APA style, conducting literature reviews, the use of electronic databases, and critiquing the research of others. It is expected that students will have knowledge of and skills in the use of computer applications, research and statistics and information literacy prior to beginning this course. The primary outcome of this course is that the doctoral student has the skills and knowledge to design and write a Qualifying Paper.

The purpose of the Qualifying Paper (QP) is to determine, in part, the student's preparation, qualifications and potential to pursue original research in the form of the doctoral dissertation. The QP involves not only an evaluation of the student's ability to apply, analyze, and synthesize the

knowledge, skills and professional attitudes developed in doctoral program course work, but it is also an evaluation of the student's ability to use these competencies in a creative and scholarly manner. The QP allows judgment of the student's ability to think judiciously and critically about the theoretical, empirical, and practical aspects of a topic related to educational leadership. There are additional competencies that contribute to the determination that the student is appropriately qualified to advance to candidacy as it pertains to the QP. These competencies and skills are further described below.

The Qualifying Paper itself is the report of a substantial review of the literature, approximately 45-60 pages (excluding front and back matter), focusing on a critical analysis of the literature on a student selected topic. The review is both descriptive and evaluative of an area of inquiry of scholarly work done in the past. The review generally identifies the topic, theme, or point to emphasize that evolved as a result of readings. Occasionally a research question is proposed to guide the review. It is not merely a summary of the literature, but a thoughtful and comprehensive analysis and synthesis that places the topic in the context of work in the field. A good review results in synthesizing the literature, formulating conclusions and recommendations, and placing the topic in an updated context of established work in the discipline.

There is a wide range of topics (provided that they relate to educational leadership) that students are permitted to pursue. However, the competencies to be demonstrated in the QP are the same, regardless of the topic. The attainment of these competencies is evaluated by the use of a standard rubric. Prior to beginning the QP, the student should have reviewed significant theoretical and empirical literature about their topic and have a level of expertise or sufficient knowledge base about the topic area. Foundational skills necessary for successful development of the QP include, but are not limited to: technical writing, APA, critical reading, critical thinking, critical writing, critiquing theory and empirical studies, research, statistics, information literacy, computer applications. These skills are gained in the research course sequence.

The QP topic should be sufficiently narrow to permit an in-depth investigation, relevant to an area of advanced study/educational leadership that guides a range of inquiry, results in an extensive search of scholarly literature, and generation of questions for further inquiry. The topic may be related to the intended topic of the student's dissertation.

The QP is equivalent to an "examination." The QP replaces the former "proctored written comprehensive examination," as one of the requirements to progress to doctoral candidacy. As with many forms of comprehensive examinations, students do not have the choice in deciding who writes questions or the evaluators.

The student must obtain formal approval for the written QP from a review panel of two or more faculty members. The review panel may require an oral examination. Because the QP is intended as a culminating "capstone" activity, the QP may not be submitted for approval until a minimum of 42 credit hours of coursework in the student's program plan of study has been completed. Usually the student completes the QP concurrent with the completion of all of the coursework in the doctoral program except the dissertation related courses. If the student selects a topic for the QP and keeps the same topic for the dissertation, the student has made substantial progress in the writing of the review of the literature for the dissertation. Thus, upon completion of the coursework and QP, the student already has made substantial progress in the writing of the dissertation proposal. Often the student's research design for their dissertation project has been developed in the research course sequence and the QP used for the review of literature of the dissertation. Completion of the QP is often one of the requirements for Candidacy.

Students successful in completing the Qualifying Paper demonstrate several competencies and skills that contribute to the graduate faculty's determination if the student is appropriately qualified to pursue original research in the form of the doctoral dissertation. These competencies and skills include:

1. Critical Thinking and Scholarly Inquiry

- Search, read, interpret, analyze, critique (appraise), integrate and synthesize research literature pertaining to selected topic
- Generate implications for future research, theory and practice through analysis of empirical, theoretical, critical/analytic, and methodological literature
- Facilitate the application of theory to practice
- Use and contribute to a variety of knowledge bases developed to deal with contemporary, as well as future problems and issues
- Cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of educational change to be able to distinguish its causes, effects, magnitude and cultural significance.

2. Mature, Professional, and Effective Writing Style

- Write a scholarly paper at a level commensurate with advanced graduate study.
- Use APA Editorial Style.
- Develop an effective writing style that is at a level commensurate with advanced graduate study: organized, understandable, smooth, cohesive, explicit, concise, and grammatically correct (language use and sentence structure); avoids bias in language; and is in APA manuscript style.

3. Accountability and Responsibility

- Understand ethical responsibilities of providing accurate information and communicating effectively.

4. Technology, Computer Applications, and Information Literacy in Scholarly Inquiry

- Use technology in scholarly inquiry mastering information literacy skills (information seeking and retrieval methods) and computer applications to document information logically, efficiently, and ethically.

*Note: The model for the Qualifying Paper as described here was originally developed by F. Dembowski and J. Scialli for the doctoral program in

Global Leadership at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida.

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Author Biography

Frederick L. Dembowski is the Hibernian Endowed Professor, and Head of the Department of Educational Leadership at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. He received his EdD from the University of Rochester, New York. He has served as a professor, department head and dean for over 25 years at Purdue University, SUNY Albany, Lynn University and the National University of Somalia, Africa. His work has focused on school management, and international development of educational organizations. He currently serves as the Editor of the AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice. He is also the Managing Editor of The NCPEA/CONNEXIONS Project. He has over 100 publications including: Effective School District Management (1999), published by AASA and Scarecrow Press; and Unbridled Spirit: Best Practices in Educational Administration – the 2006 NCPEA YEARBOOK (2006).

GUIDING THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL: A STUDENT ADVOCACY APPROACH

Approximately 40 to 50% of doctoral students never complete their programs (Golde, 2005). Most research on doctoral students focuses on those who have succeeded in earning degrees. The unsuccessful ones quietly slip away and offer little explanations for their departure. Graduate students who leave with all course work completed but no dissertation written are the most frustrating of those who leave. Effective doctoral advising through the proposal and dissertation processes could be the key to higher completion rates and to saving educational leadership graduate students before they leave doctoral programs.

Adult Learners

Doctoral students in education are older than their peers in other disciplines. The average age of education doctoral recipients in 2005 was 42.5 years, compared to 33 years in all other disciplines. Education doctoral recipients also take longer to complete their degrees, with an average of 13 years in a graduate program compared to 8.2 years in other disciplines (Smallwood, 2006).

Adult learners, in general, come to the learning experience with a specific set of characteristics (Knowles, Elwood, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). They have a need to know, a deliberate reason for learning. They arrive in the learning environment with many and varied experiences. Their past learning experiences are rich with life contexts. At this stage in their learning, the focus of adult learners is typically work-or life-oriented. They prefer problem-centered or performance-centered learning orientations, and they respond to external motivators. As they age, individual differences among adult learners increase with age and experience.

Adult learning characteristics have implications in advising doctoral students in educational administration. With a pragmatic approach to learning, doctoral students have a purposeful goal: to earn a degree. They are on a straight and narrow path to that goal and want to accomplish only those tasks that help them reach their goal.

However, in educational administration programs, the doctoral students are not twenty-some year-old future bench scientists. They are not funded by the National Science Foundation or by doctoral advisors' grants. The doctoral students in educational administration come to doctoral work from the world of practice. They may have taken a year or two from practice to work full time on the degree or may be a fully employed educator. Undoubtedly, the doctoral students in educational administration are adults, usually not young adults, but mature with years of professional experience.

The doctoral students' experiences in life and learning shape their interests. They come to the experience with rich histories in education settings. Unlike counterparts in other disciplines, they have pursued professional endeavors as educators and, most likely, have spent a number of years in the educational field. This extensive background in educating students influences what they value. They are passionate in their commitment to education. They want to be the leaders in improving schools for students (Labaree, 2003).

Doctoral students rarely have a frame of reference in designing a proposal. As advisors, our responsibility is to provide a view of that design. Students might have pieces of the experience but not the complete picture, from a synthesized perspective. As adult learners, they seek a directive approach to learning how to write a proposal. The discovery method of proposal development does not meet their immediate needs as adult learners.

Framework

One of the critical issues in doctoral advising is the number of individuals who are counted as All But Dissertation (ABD) each year. One way to counter this trend is to commit to completing the doctoral process with the student. The doctoral advisor's mantra should be, "If I agree to advise this student, I will commit myself to encouraging the student to completion." Doctoral advisors have significant responsibility for the success of their advisees (Grady, 2000).

In doctoral programs that take pride in credit hour production, admitting large numbers of doctoral students is encouraged. This practice does not serve students well, since students may be admitted who are not capable of

sustaining the pursuit of a doctoral degree. Only students who can succeed should be admitted. Only a practical number of doctoral advisees should be given to each advisor.

The dissertation is one research study. It is not ones life's work. The topic of the study should be given reasonable parameters. The dissertation demonstrates the student's scholarly and research capabilities. It represents one scholarly endeavor. The study should be "doable." This means that the student should be able to complete the research in a realistic amount of time. The study should not present insurmountable barriers to completion. The subjects for the study and the data should be accessible. The complexity of the inquiry should be suitable to the dissertation expectations.

Occasionally students are overly ambitious or enthusiastic. Because they are frequently research novices, they may not see the pitfalls or traps in their plans for research. Faculty who have extensive research experience can help students establish parameters for a study that provide appropriate depth and rigor without encumbering a student with a research study that cannot be completed in a reasonable period of time.

Writing a dissertation is a novel experience. Only rarely does an individual write more than one dissertation in a lifetime. A dissertation is unlike any other form of writing. It has a form and formula unto itself. It does not reflect the writing skills acquired in high school or as an undergraduate. The dissertation is a scholarly work, suggesting that the author is the "world's leading authority" on the subject of the dissertation. It is a lengthy document following the conventions of quantitative or qualitative research. The dissertation is written to the satisfaction of a doctoral supervisory committee that includes members from an educational administration department as well as other departments. The committee typically includes an "outside" member who represents the interests of the Graduate College of the institution. Writing to meet the expectations of a committee is a unique form of writing. Additionally, a dissertation is written to be read by individuals who are not experts in the research subject. Sometimes this is jokingly referred to as the "Grandmother Test" in that the dissertation should be written so that "your grandmother could read and understand it."

Given the uniqueness of the writing task, one would not expect doctoral students to come to the learning experience with the skills and knowledge to write the dissertation without direction. Hence, the doctoral advisor's role is pivotal to the success of the doctoral student. Doctoral advising requires a directive approach not a discovery approach. The advisor's direction is evident in the rate at which students complete their dissertations and in the quality of the dissertations they complete.

The dissertation separates the doctoral degree from other degrees. It is the rite of passage. As the creation of an enduring scholarly work, it is the evidence of the independent scholar who has become a world's leading authority on the subject of the dissertation. The writing of the dissertation is the most isolating and challenging aspect of the pursuit of the doctoral degree. The dissertation experience represents the rocks and shoals where many doctoral students are left behind, perhaps abandoned, as ABDs. It is the advisor's challenge to prevent this outcome.

Advisor as Advocate

To advise a student through the proposal and dissertation process is challenging. The varied roles you play throughout the process change as the student's needs arise. Your primary role is one as an advocate for the student. You can make the difference between a successful experience for the student and an experience plagued with problems and barriers. Your commitment to the student plays a major factor in the student's success. Keeping what is best for the student in the forefront is at the heart of the advising experience.

Knowing when to listen empathetically and when to be assertive with expectations by drawing a line of accountability is the key to effective doctoral advising. Sometimes students just need to articulate their self-doubts, fears, and concerns. As their advisor, your listening and interpersonal communication skills are called upon, and in some cases, maximized. Creating a safe environment for students to vent and talk through their difficulties is often all that is needed. Other times, holding them to agreed-upon timelines with no exceptions and great expectations is what is demanded. Intuition plays a major part in discerning what is needed at the exact time. No

matter what course of action is needed with individual students at distinct points in their graduate work, the giving of your time and effort is the hallmark of a doctoral advisor.

Not all faculty members share the same strengths or abilities. The work of a faculty member involves many roles. Faculty members are doctoral advisors. They are doctoral supervisory, university, college, department and professional committee members. Faculty members are teachers, grant writers, and directors. They are scholars and researchers.

The doctoral advisor must assist the student in understanding the multiplicity of faculty roles. As the student's advocate, the selection of doctoral supervisory committee members is a critical task. The student will write a dissertation that must meet the expectations of the doctoral supervisory committee. An advisor should know the scholarly and research expertise, and the methodology expertise of the faculty members. The advisor should know how well they "get along" in the doctoral supervisory setting. The advisor should know which faculty members facilitate and support the work of doctoral students.

The doctoral advisor who knows these faculty strengths and abilities enhances the student's doctoral experiences. The advisor who is negligent in advising students on these issues creates barriers and obstacles in the student's doctoral process.

The doctoral advisor must assist students in selecting courses that will support the writing of the dissertation. Specific courses in research methodology that facilitate the writing of the proposal and conducting the dissertation research are essential. Courses should be selected based on (a) the content that will augment the doctoral study and (b) the teaching strengths of the faculty members.

Models of Excellence

One of the best ways to get students comfortable with writing a proposal is to have them read a variety of other research proposal types. These models will help them envision what a proposal looks like, what its components are, and how it is structured. However, warn students that not all proposal

structures look the same. It depends on what the researcher wants to accomplish. Highlight the necessary components they share.

Another resource for students of the doctoral dissertation process is the group of doctoral students who have presented their dissertation proposals to their committees. These students can present their proposals to the students who are embarking on the dissertation proposal process, describe their preparation for the presentation, reflect on the presentation to the committee and their learning from the experience, and provide recommendations for those who are in the proposal preparation process. These students can provide insights and answer questions that reflect the student view of the process. They also are a potential resource to the students who are following them in the doctoral process.

Videotaping the proposal presentations and the final oral defenses provides a great resource for the faculty member who is guiding doctoral students. These videotapes, when acquired with the appropriate permissions, can be used in the classroom, as an addition to distance classes taught by methods such as Blackboard, or in one-on-one advising of doctoral students.

Talking to individuals who recently completed their dissertations or those who have recently presented their dissertation proposals builds student confidence. The process and expectations are demystified by these conversations. Viewing videotapes of the presentations are alternative means of giving doctoral students an inside look at the process. In addition, these conversations or videotapes are instructional from a content perspective and a research methodology perspective. The knowledge gained from these experiences is a worthy addition to doctoral studies. Students may gain different perspectives on their research studies by exposures to these experiences.

The goal of showcasing the parade of graduates and students who have presented their proposals is to present models of excellence. These models include examples of excellence in writing, in selecting a topic that has critical significance to the study of educational leadership, and in presenting the study. These models also include examples of excellence in research methods. They are critical to the students preparing their proposals. The models often reveal new procedures or questions that can guide a study. The

variety, depth, and richness of these models surpass the examples that can be included in books on preparation of dissertation proposals.

Peer Advising

When an advisor has a large number of doctoral advisees, peer advising is a means of facilitating the proposal development process. This involves bringing the advisees together in a support group to assist each other in the completion of the proposal process. This process can be an adjunct to the proposal seminar. One of the keys to the success of peer advising is that the students in the group all have the same advisor. Although universities, graduate colleges, colleges, and departments may have uniform standards, procedures, or expectations for the doctoral proposal or doctoral dissertation, the advisor continues to play a primary role in the student's completion of these tasks. Each advisor has individual expectations, standards, procedures, and idiosyncrasies. The wise doctoral student will heed the voice and directives of the doctoral advisor and listen carefully to other doctoral students advised by that individual. Peers have important information about the advisor that will facilitate the completion of these tasks and pave the way for productive work with the doctoral advisor. Doctoral students should focus on their doctoral advisor and block out recommendations or suggestions that emanate from students who are advised by other faculty. Advisors have autonomy in working with their advisees. Listening to conflicting messages causes cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and slows the proposal writing quest.

Perhaps the medical model of "See one, do one, teach one" is the best method for teaching proposal development (Grady, 1993). Certainly the recent doctoral graduate has the best tips on the process of proposal development. Recent experience makes one the expert of the hour.

Enlisting recent graduates to present their completed dissertations to a proposal development class is an enticing learning opportunity for the students who are learning to develop a dissertation proposal. Recent graduates offer much wisdom. They are experts at method, content, and process. They offer hope to the graduate students by demonstrating that success and completion of the degree are possible. The recent graduates can demystify the doctoral process by answering the myriad questions students

bring to the doctoral process. Often these are questions best answered by students, not professors. A variety of graduates, male and female, young and old, quantitative and qualitative researchers, quick and slow to complete, can offer different perspectives to the students who are in the process of developing their proposals.

Dress Rehearsals

As students engage in the development of the dissertation proposal, a series of opportunities for them to present their "work in progress" should be available. This series of rehearsals will defuse the anxiety doctoral students sometimes experience.

Opportunities may occur in a formal proposal writing course, research methods classes, informal support groups convened for doctoral advisors with doctoral advisees, conferences, or research seminars. The advisor is responsible for identifying opportunities for students to present: (a) the dissertation topic, (2) the background of the problem or context, (c) the purpose statement, (d) the research question or questions, (e) the methods, (f) the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study, (g) the bias of the researcher, and (h) the significance of the study.

These presentation experiences offer the students the challenge of responding to questions and reacting to peer critique. Preparing for the formal presentation of the dissertation proposal to the committee and refining the quality of the study are the goals of these events. The student refines both research and presentation skills through these opportunities.

Students also benefit from listening to their classmates' presentations and questioning them about their studies. Each of these events is a teaching and learning occasion.

Conversations before Proposal Development

The structure of a proposal is closely tied to the purpose of the proposal. A proposal's purpose is to explain and justify a proposed study to an audience of non-experts on the topic (Maxwell, 2005). Once students fully understand the proposal's purpose and the underlying implications, proposal

writing becomes easier. The majority of committee reviewers reject proposals not because they disagree with what is presented, but because they do not understand the student's intent (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000). Reviewers tend not to accept unclear ideas. Emphasize with students that clarity, coherence, and connectivity among ideas throughout the document are the necessary components to write a successful proposal.

One way to ensure that students adhere to a quality proposal with all the necessary elements in explaining and justifying a study is to provide a rubric of expectations (Bryant, 2004; Lovetts, 2005). A rubric can direct preliminary discussions with students on proposal development and serve as a compass for effective content and writing throughout the process. Students can use rubrics formatively during the research and drafting stages of their proposals. The rubric provides benchmarks for students to judge and revise their proposals during the developmental stages. It gives them a level of expectation and information about what they need to do to reach that expectation.

Keep in mind, however, that graduate school is the door through which students enter into a career, not a destination. The rubric can help all students achieve quality work based on their personal needs, capabilities, and professional goals. For some, the rubric will stretch their performance beyond what they thought they were capable of accomplishing. For others, it will provide an elevated target in further developing their sophisticated research skills.

Using mutually agreed upon departmental rubrics for not only proposals but also dissertations is beneficial in providing formative and cumulative assessments of the department's program for educational leadership. As a rich record of student achievement, departments can use the rubric results as one measurement of learner outcomes. Conversations about improving the program's effectiveness can center on committee reviewers' completed rubrics assessing student work. The rubric ratings can also demonstrate how well advisors within the department are advising doctoral candidates through the proposal and dissertation processes.

Developing the Proposal

Often a specific course is dubbed as "The Proposal Development Class." Occasionally, doctoral advisors are able to develop a seminar or course specifically for their own doctoral students. These courses provide benefits to both students and advisors. There is the element of sharing with others in the dissertation writing quest, and there is the economy of scale dimension of delivering the same information to a group of individuals rather than to one individual at a time.

Pre-Topic Selection Conversations

From the first handshake with the doctoral advisee, the emphasis should be on shepherding the doctoral student to graduation. The pinnacle experience of the doctoral experience is the writing of the dissertation.

The process of proposal development should begin the first time the advisor meets the doctoral student. To some this suggestion is outside the "traditional" view of proposal development. Selecting a proposal topic begins long before the actual writing of the proposal. A few students have a clear image of what they want to study and pursue that picture throughout their course work. For the majority of students, however, topic selection is a painful process, especially if they receive little guidance.

Conversations about proposal development start with a doctoral student's first course in their program. During the initial meeting of program development when course selection occurs, dialogue around what interests the student in the eventual writing serves three purposes. First, it focuses attention on the results of the learning experiences--the dissertation. The student begins to reflect on possible topics. With this goal in mind, course selections are intentional in helping to reach that goal. Courses are explicitly selected with the results in mind. This approach helps the student work backward through the process, identifying the result, then the means to get there. Second, projects and research throughout the coursework are more focused. Whatever is accomplished within the coursework experiences, pieces are added to the total picture of the research. Course by course, the work contributes to the writing of not only the proposal, but also the dissertation. Most importantly, during the initial meeting of program development, the advisor initiates the beginning of many thoughtful

conversations about what is important to the doctoral student as a researcher.

Topic Selection

Selecting a proposal topic can be an arduous task, but it need not be. With the doctoral advisor's guidance, the process can be a great opportunity for discovery. The key in topic selection is advising students from a constructivist point of view.

All good topic selection begins with self-reflection. Ask students what piques their interests and passions, what topics get them excited. Through provocative questioning, encourage students to think beyond their obvious interests. Remind them that one of their goals is to create new knowledge of significance about a selected research topic. Shulman (1999) refers to this as generativity, to build on the scholarship and research of those who have come before us. Meaningful education research must be cumulative, based on prior research and scholarship surrounding the topic. Questions framed around this axiom enrich their thinking approach to personal interests.

Provide opportunities for students to be comfortable with "staying in the question" at first. During the beginning of the selection process, students are unsure of direction, questions to ask, or the process. Reassure them that this initial reflective time in proposal development is ambiguous and ill defined, at least at the beginning. It is part of the process. Ambiguity surrounding ideas is natural. At this point in the proposal development, they are still addressing big ideas with too broad a focus. Only in the follow-up discussions with their advisor and pursuit of possible ideas, will they narrow their topic.

Advising students during initial proposal development, particularly when selecting a research topic, takes more time at the beginning. Be open to meeting with students to dialogue on possibilities. Let them talk through their ideas and think aloud. Encourage them to pursue fuzzy thoughts. Create an environment of give and take on ideas. Remember students must own their research pursuits and interests, not yours. They need to feel a connection to their research. These conversations will lead them to a clearer picture of their selected topic.

Along with participating in reflective conversations, suggest students scan areas of interest in their readings. Encourage them to become prolific readers within their field and in diverse arenas. Have them constantly seek information wherever they go and from whomever they contact. Digesting this information from a variety of sources helps students arrive at a research idea. It also hones their critical thinking skills. Liedtka (1998) refers to this as intelligent opportunism.

The first task is topic choice. Students should be guided in reviewing their strengths in educational leadership and identifying the aspects of educational leadership that are most interesting to them. They should consider the topics they choose to write about when given a class assignment or topics they are most passionate about as potential subjects. They should review the issues that are the most significant in education--which topics have the greatest valence. Finding a niche is essential.

Students will need to be passionate about their topics for several years. Therefore, in the selection process, they must choose a topic that will sustain their interest for those years and perhaps for a lifetime. It is always easier to write about a topic for which you have passion (Grady, 2004). Since they will be world's leading authorities on these topics by the time they complete the dissertation, they should have a lifetime of passion to invest in the inquiry.

Students' experiences can inform decisions about topic choice. By examining their past experiences, their interests, passions, and commitments become apparent. These interests, passions, and commitments are potential sources of topics.

Hot topics may be alluring as subjects of doctoral dissertations. These topics may be useful because they fill a current niche in the research literature. Writing about these topics may be satisfying because they are prominent in the conversations of educators.

Some topics may be particularly fruitful because they will allow doctoral students to have access to new positions upon completion of their doctoral studies. For individuals preparing for roles as university faculty members, topic selection may be especially important. The dissertation may be the

source of several publications for the new faculty member. It may point to a research specialization that will sustain a university faculty member's research agenda. The dissertation topic may lead to selection for a specific faculty position that requires a particular emphasis.

For a doctoral student moving into new administrative positions, the subject of the dissertation may lead to selection for a position because of the specific area of expertise. It may give the student a specific set of skills that are marketable in administrative circles. For some doctoral students, the dissertation topic is parallel to their current work as educational leaders and augments their administrative roles.

A careful review of each of these sources is part of selecting the topic. The student must be cautioned that enrolling in the "Dissertation Topic of the Week Club" is not advisable. It is not productive. Students need to be assisted in carefully selecting a topic that will sustain their interest for the duration of their doctoral studies.

The Search for Sources

Once the topic is selected, the student needs to be guided in identifying sources. The sources include refereed journal articles, books, proceedings, electronic databases, archives, and special collections. Some students may need a library orientation since their research library skills may need to be refreshed. Orientations to online library sources may be useful to the beginning researcher as well.

Searching the Databases

The parameters of the search should be defined. The parameters should include the determination of the time frame for the search. Is ten years sufficient or should the search include the previous twenty years? Should the sources be exclusively in education or should the sources include sociology, organizational theory, organizational development, policy, business, or other fields? These fields should be identified at the beginning of the search.

The topic should be examined to determine the keywords that will guide the search. Once the time frame, fields of the search, and keywords are identified, the actual search should be conducted.

One method of approaching the search is to collect all relevant sources at once. This search precedes the writing of the literature review. By collecting all the sources, the reading of the sources can be conducted as a comprehensive initial event. This allows continuity in examining the sources. By reading the sources from "top to bottom of the stack," the student is able to recognize the leaders or most prominent experts in the field of inquiry. This approach allows the student to recognize the frequently cited authors and studies. It expedites the reading of the sources because the repetitive citations of the same sources become apparent. A process that includes reading several sources per day during an extended period of time is a fragmentary process and does not provide the in-depth examination of the sources. The intention should be to touch the sources only once. Highlighting the relevant information and converting this information to verbatim notes in a database that includes the complete bibliographic citation is a means of preserving the source information.

Once the notes are collected, a literature review can be prepared that supports the study's purpose. Local department practices in proposal development will determine whether a complete literature review is presented as part of the dissertation proposal. However, students need to complete the database search in order to justify the originality and significance of their topics, and to provide the context of their studies.

Selecting the Method(s)

Once the topic has been selected and the purpose of the study stated, the research questions can be identified. The research questions guide the methods that will be used in a study. The methods may be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. Once the methods are determined, it is essential to collect the core sources on the methodology.

Just as the doctoral student will be a world's leading authority on the topic of the dissertation, so too will the doctoral student be a world's leading authority on the methods of the dissertation study. For this reason, doctoral

students should be encouraged to take as many methods of research courses as possible. These courses will enable the student to conduct the dissertation research with confidence. They also offer career possibilities to the doctoral student who may choose a faculty role teaching research methods or advising doctoral students. Some doctoral students may choose to become directors of institutional research or experts in assessment or evaluation. Each of these career possibilities rely on research expertise.

Searching Methodology Sources

A search of methodology sources needs to be conducted in a manner similar to the search for sources on the topic. A time frame for the search of methods sources should be identified. The review should reflect the most current research approaches. The examination should include refereed articles, books, dissertations, proceedings, and papers presented at scholarly meetings.

Once all the methods sources have been collected, the reading of the sources should begin. Again, reading all the sources at one time will expedite the process and allow the identification of the leading authorities on the methods. Highlighted sections of the reading should be converted to verbatim reading notes that include complete bibliographic citations. This process eliminates the need to return to the individual sources at a later date. The notes are available in one location and can be used for other research projects or as teaching notes.

Institutional Review Boards

An essential part of the proposal process is developing the protocol for the Institutional Review Board or the Human Subjects Review Board. Institutions vary in when, during the proposal process, the protocols must be submitted and approved.

Completing the protocols is helpful in preparing the methodology section of the dissertation proposal. The sections of the protocol demand that one attend to the various aspects of the research process. The "who, what, where, when, and how" questions must be addressed. How subjects will be recruited, how confidentiality will be maintained, and the time frame for the

study, are among the issues to be addressed in the protocol. If interviews will be conducted, the interview protocol must be completed.

Style Manuals

A variety of style manuals are available to the scholar. The manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) has become common in much of the writing in educational leadership. Universities, colleges, departments, disciplines, and faculty may specify the style manual that should be used. Advisors guide the student in identifying the appropriate style manual as well as the university dissertation guidelines governing the research.

Identifying Bias

An important part of the proposal process is identifying bias. It is common to choose a topic based on ones passions, experience, work role, and interests. Concomitant with these interests is bias. Revealing researcher bias is a necessary part of the proposal writing process. Bias is neither wrong nor right, it just "is." Bias may be the inspiration for the study, and it may be the fire that sustains the research.

Editing and Revising

Editing and revising is the refining of the proposal. It is challenging work since it requires one to give up what one has written. It requires self-critique. It is difficult to part with written words.

In guiding students, urge them to read the proposal aloud. Hearing the words allows them to detect grammatical and structural difficulties. The ears can often do the work that the eyes cannot.

The task of editing may become tedious for some students. It is a necessary yet challenging process. However, correct editing can make the difference between an acceptable or quality manuscript. As Grady (2000) describes:

The editing process may be more difficult than writing the initial draft of the manuscript. Editing takes patience and endless attention to detail...Editing may not provide the same sense of satisfaction, productivity,

and accomplishment one has when one is in the generative, free writing phase. (p.70)

The editing has to come after the writing is completed. Often it is possible to become tangled in the editing process too early. The writing process can be blocked when one becomes obsessive about writing perfection before the writing has been completed. Occasionally individuals will hide in editing to avoid writing. This is not a productive approach to writing or editing.

Editing is the polishing and burnishing of the manuscript. A well-edited manuscript reflects the faculty advisor's and the student's attention to quality. A poorly edited manuscript should be challenged by a committee. A poorly edited manuscript suggests that a student is not worthy of the doctoral degree since it is the highest academic degree awarded. Individuals who are challenged writers should invest in an editor to assist them in polishing the prose.

Local Customs

Each department, college, and university has procedures and guidelines that determine what is acceptable in dissertations and proposals. There is no "One Best System" for the process. Learning local conventions is part of joining a faculty.

However, attention to the faculty role of advisor as advocate is a universal for doctoral faculty members. Providing models of excellence and peer advising are methods of "leading the way" for doctoral students. Taking time to assist doctoral students leads them to identify significant and original dissertation topics. Topic selection forms the basis for purpose statements and research questions that provide the direction for the development of the dissertation proposal. Careful literature searches in the subject area and the methodology area will enable the doctoral students to be "world's leading authorities" in both their topic and their method. The findings of these searches lead to the development of the literature review and establish the significance and originality of the research. Dress rehearsals build the self confidence of the doctoral students as they prepare to present their dissertation proposals. The rehearsals also strengthen the research studies by providing multiple opportunities for the studies to be

refined. The editing process further refines the proposals. Collectively, these activities guided by the advisor reflect the faculty role of advisor as advocate.

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Author Biographies

Marilyn L. Grady, Ph.D., is a professor of educational administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has advised 51 students through the completion of their doctoral degrees. Her research specialty is leadership.

Sharon C. Hoffman is an Educational Leadership and Higher Education Ph.D. candidate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research interests are leadership theory and developing strategic capacities in organizations. She has 25 years of experience in P-16 settings.

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION OF EDUCATIONAL
ADMINISTRATION: A KNOWLEDGE BASED COMPASS OF MORAL
DEVELOPMENT

**"Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that
no reasonable man can doubt it?"**

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

Stage One: Moral Introduction

In 2004, the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration
(NCPEA) issued a call for redefining the knowledge base of the profession
(Creighton, MacNeil, Busch, & Waxman, 2005). NCPEA scholars
responded to this call by discussing the knowledge base's role in guiding
professional development (Berry, 2005); creating internships (Hite &
Matthews, 2005), effecting change (McDonald & Kilgore, 2006);
conducting action research (Alford & Ballenger, 2006); inspiring school
reform (Tripses, Philhower, Halverson, Noe, & Morford, 2005); and
developing school climate and school improvement (Lindahl, 2006). The
common theme among these discussions is the use of knowledge to create
socially just school leaders. In spite of the significant impact of this
discourse, no conversations have focused on the moral implications of the
doctoral dissertation of educational administration.

In 1651, the dissertation was described as being a written treatment for a
particular subject (Sternberg, 1981). Since that time, researchers (Holbrook,
2002; Isaac, Quinlan, & Walker, 1992; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman,
1999; Sternberg, 1981) have expanded the definition to indicate that the
dissertation should: (a) demonstrate mastery of subject; (b) present original
and independent work; (c) highlight various research techniques; (d) show
potential for publication, and (c) contribute unique and new information to
a chosen field of study. After reviewing these and similar themes, I believe
that the doctoral dissertation of educational administration is one of the
most crucial knowledge based experiences of our field. The main reason is
that most recipients of this dissertation are public school leaders.

Sergiovanni (1992) indicated that public school leaders are required to use their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to affect change in schools and their surrounding communities. Drawing upon these implications for social justice, I write this paper to discuss the moral implications of the dissertation experience for our field.

I have outlined this chapter in three phases. I use the first phase to propose the moral foundation of the doctoral dissertation of educational administration. I use the second phase to explain the possible reasons for the lack of discussion about the moral implications of the doctoral dissertation of educational administration. I use the third phase to provide the profession with a plan for connecting the doctoral dissertation of educational administration to the theme of morality. These phases are anchored by my previous research on the doctoral dissertation of educational administration, professors' and students' perceptions of this scholarly work, and related literature about the relationship between knowledge and morals. In addition, these phases are also designed to about the dissertation's moral relevance to our field.

Phase I—Moral RelevanceStage Two: A Moral Foundation

This position paper highlights the doctoral dissertation of educational administration in the context of the relationship between knowledge and moral leadership. The theoretical framework is Kohlberg's (1973) theory of moral development. Kohlberg theorized that we progress through three phases and six stages in life. As children, we encounter the Preconventional Phase of moral development. This phase consists of two stages. The first stage is obedience and punishment. During this stage, our behaviors are greatly influenced by authoritative figures. During the second stage, we began to display attitudes of selfishness to protect our own best interests.

After completing this stage, we enter the Conventional Phase of moral development. This phase consists of the third and fourth stages of development. During the third stage, we begin to conform to society's expectations for appropriate behavior. We purposefully display behavior

that pleases other people. During the fourth stage, we develop a clear understanding of the laws and duties of society.

Kohlberg (1973) stated that during the Postconventional Phase and stages of moral development, we are adults who begin to serve others. We also began to reflect on our contributions to society. Kohlberg argued that most adults never reach these stages. This inability is due to the fact that as children, they failed to grasp or were not exposed to the moral implications of life experiences. As a result, Kohlberg (1973) posited that adults must model moral judgment for children. He modeled this belief by presenting morals based vignettes to young people.

Phase II—The Moral DilemmaStage Three: Moral Concussions

In my opinion, Kohlberg's (1973) stages of moral development are related to the doctoral dissertation of educational administration. In effect, they both take people through sequential stages of cognitive development. Kohlberg, however, does not specify that a specific knowledge guides us through his stages of moral development. Instead, he believed that reflection on the morality of knowledge helps us to advance through the stages. Kohlberg (1973) believed that when encountering views that conflict with our thoughts, we reorganize our thinking to include new views. This reorganization process allows us to proceed to higher stages of moral thinking.

I agree with Kohlberg's (1973) assessment of the relationship between moral development and social justice. With regard to the doctoral dissertation, I disagree with his views on the significance of an external knowledge base. One reason is that knowledge can bridge the gap between moral and social justice leadership. The second reason is the dissertation requires students to use a previous established knowledge base to reconstitute their thinking about a particular subject (Holbrook, 2002).

Bertrand Russell (1959) indicated that knowledge and morals are two inseparable entities. According to him, knowledge facilitates morality by building the intelligence to:

- Engage in noble acts of selflessness;

- Place others before self;
- Generate knowledge that can be applied to the world;

- Adopt new social moral perspectives of others and society;
- Find and report the truth to effect change; and

- Assume various roles of servant hood.

In other words, Russell (1959) believed that knowledge creates communities of moral leadership. Sergiovanni (1992) indicated that school leaders are models of moral leadership. He morally reasoned that they are required to use and project knowledge in a manner that creates a climate of ethics in schools and communities. His reasoning supports Russell's (1959) belief in putting knowledge into action to improve society. Russell also claimed that society gains moral benefits from disseminators of shared knowledge. In my opinion, the doctoral dissertation of educational administration is a knowledge based work awarded to school leaders. Evidence to this effect can be seen in how students gather research based opinions of other scholars to present new knowledge about a particular field. Drawing from Kohlberg's (1973) theory, I believe that our doctoral graduates should use this knowledge base to treat society. This step could develop their sense of moral development as they acquire educational experiences.

However, some professors and doctoral students of educational administration have informed me that they do not share this belief. Of course, they believe that the dissertation is built upon knowledge. But the professors indicated that colleges and university award doctoral dissertations to make money and award students with the highest educational achievement. The students have indicated that the doctoral degree is a symbol of higher pay and professional prestige. Listed below is a vignette that reflects their opinions and my experiences with and observations of numerous doctoral students.

Are You Doctoral Student A?

Doctoral Student A is a doctoral student at University B. She is also the Director of Student Development for Social Justice School District. Listed below is a description of how she completed her dissertation.

Doctoral Student A's Stages of Dissertation Development

Stage One: Self Centered Anxiety
Corresponding Kohlbergian StagesStages One and Two
Doctoral Student A is anxious to assemble a dissertation committee that will approve of her dissertation proposal. Once the committee approves of the proposal, she quickly learns to obey their wishes for writing the remaining chapters of the dissertation.

Stage Two: Respond and Obey Stage
Corresponding Kohlbergian StagesStages Three and Four
During this stage, Doctoral Student A exhausts every available resource and effort to complete the dissertation. Her reflection on chapters is more closely aligned to committee suggestions for revisions than moral exploration of the theories found in the literature review. In addition, Doctoral Student A knows that the committee will determine if she reaches graduation or remains ABD (All But Dissertation).

Stage Three: Social Suppression
Corresponding Kohlbergian StagesStages Five and Six
Doctoral Student A defends her dissertation and earns the doctoral degree in educational administration.She knows that this accomplishment can raise her financial and social standing in society. But she seldom incorporates the scholarly work in her platform for educational leadership. Instead, she immediately provides the director of personnel with proof of earning her doctoral degree. After receiving a $20,000 raise, Doctoral Student A lowers her dissertation into a time capsule that consists of other doctoral papers.

The gaps between the stages highlight the lack of reflection on the moral and socially just significance of the doctoral dissertation of educational administration. They also offer an explanation of why some professors and doctoral students of educational administration do not attach moral thinking and action to me the dissertation experience. Some professors have confirmed this belief with comments such as "With all that money that comes from getting the doctoral degree in our field, why should students even be concerned about using their dissertations after graduation?" to "Most doctoral programs of educational administration are cash cows that graze upon the fees for dissertation and other coursework expenses."

Stage Four: Andragogy of the Suppressed

After engaging in verbal discussions about the doctoral dissertation of educational administration, I conducted a qualitative study on the postdoctoral dissertation uses of 118 doctoral graduates from our field. Of this population, there were 57 (48%) graduates with doctor of Education degrees (EdD) in educational administration. Sixty-One (52%) graduates

held doctor of philosophy (PhD) degrees in educational administration. The graduates completed a questionnaire that measured their use of the dissertation for socially just purposes.

The instrument consisted of the following questions:

1. Why did you choose your dissertation topic?
2. Describe the rationale and just and democratic components of your dissertation.
3. How did your educational administration program inform you of the ethical and democratic significance of your dissertation?
4. How did your educational administration program's professors encourage you to use your dissertation to inspire a just and democratic society?
5. Give an example of how you used the dissertation to inspire a just and democratic society.
6. After participating in this study, how will you use your dissertation to inspire a just and democratic society?"

These questions were designed to build a theory about doctoral graduates' interpretations and uses of their dissertations for socially just reasons. In addition, the questions were designed to focus the participants' attention to the possible need to use their work to promote justice and democracy in the profession and communities. Listed below are representative samples of the responses to these questions.

1. Why did you choose your dissertation topic?

The PhD graduates and EdD graduates indicated their dissertation studies emanated from the curiosity to examine a particular area of interest. Their inquiries eventually lead to exploring the just and democratic implications of the concept and surrounding issues.

Representative PhD graduate responses were:

"It was a subject I knew little about. I felt that vocational education had been treated poorly by most community college administrators, even though funds make vocational education the 'cash cow' of community colleges. I

looked on it as an opportunity to explore a subject area I wasn't familiar with."

"I teach a diverse population and we have a large percentage of students in that diverse population. I wanted to see how culture influenced their decision to enter postsecondary education."

A representative EdD graduate response was:

"I was interested in the home schooling trend and its potential impact. I was also interested in adding to an area that hasn't been explored a great deal."

"I wanted to extend the students' and parents' understanding of how technology could connect homes and schools. I honestly felt that I could achieve this goal by conducting research to validate technology."

2. Describe the just and democratic significance of your dissertation.

A majority of the PhD graduates indicated that the advancement of understanding educational leadership was the just and democratic significance of their dissertations.

A majority of the EdD graduates indicated that reflection and service was the just and democratic significance of their dissertations.

For example, one PhD graduate stated:

"I hoped by doing a quantitative and qualitative study, I could prove that leadership also entailed comprehending how culture influenced Hispanic students to the decision of this earn a postsecondary degree. I used a survey and an interview process, analyzed both and correlated them for information".

Another PhD graduate stated:

"I wanted to provide my school district with the statistical evidence to prove that we should consider the option of creating year-round schooling."

An EdD graduate stated:

"My rationale for this dissertation is that students who spend two years in an early intervention program should perform as well as students who were not in the program because the aim of the program was to get students on track for their grade level and then to exit the program. Students who were being compared on the Criterion-Reference Competency Test in reading and mathematics performed significantly below their regular education students even when they had been in the early intervention program for two years. Thus, it seems only right to rectify this unjust situation."

As another example, consider this response from an EdD graduate:

"I just kept thinking about how I needed to really make the case for removing so many of our students from special education classrooms. The reason is that many of them were undeservingly placed in these classrooms. I hope that my investigation would reveal this injustice that plagued my school district."

3. How did your educational administration program inform you of the ethical and

democratic significance of your dissertation?

The PhD graduates indicated that the textbooks and coursework helped them to realize the ethical and democratic significance of writing their dissertations. The EdD graduates indicated that by interacting with their peers, they developed an understanding of how their dissertation subjects relate to the promotion of a just and democratic society.

A sample PhD graduate response was:

"I believe that the program courses taken at my university allowed me an opportunity to take a look at the social and community implications of the impact of student learning in the primary grades."

Another example was:

"I believe that my textbooks helped me to realize the significance of possibly extending my dissertation beyond graduation. I mean that

everytime I reread certain chapter, I just gained a new perspective of how to use my vehicle to focus my study on the needs of my school and community."

A sample EdD graduate response was:

"During group discussions, my cohort members and I helped each other a great deal to identify some of the ethical implications of our dissertation topics."

Another EdD graduate stated:

"We often talked to each other about our dissertation topics. These discussions really helped me to realize that my dissertation could be used to think the thought processes of other people."

4. How did your educational administration program's professors encourage you to apply your dissertations towards promoting a just and democratic society?

Majority of the PhD and EdD graduates stated that their professors didn't encourage them to use their dissertations to promote a just and democratic society. A small sample of both groups was only verbally encouraged to use their dissertations to create a just and democratic society. Of this population, only the PhD graduates indicated that they were encouraged to write articles about their dissertations. Representative responses from the majority of the PhD graduates were:

"Didn't."

"They Never Did."

"Not sure we talked about it in that particular aspect."

"They haven't."

A representative response from majority of the EdD graduates was:

"After I defended my dissertation, my professors basically told me that no body is going to read that long thing. So up until seeing this survey, I haven't really worried about looking at my dissertation".

A representative response from both of the small percentage of PhD graduates was:

"The professors were supportive in this endeavor and informed me of multiple avenues to develop my dissertation topic. My chair was especially helpful".

A representative response from the smaller percentage of EdD graduates was:

"My professors gave me plenty of encouragement to taking a look at using my dissertation to further my research if I so desire. They all indicated that that I should write a few article about my dissertation"

5. Give an example of how you used your dissertation to promote justice and democracy in your field or other fields of expertise.

The PhD graduates and EdD graduates indicated that prior to completing this survey they did not realize that their dissertations could inspire a just and democratic society.

For example, one PhD graduate stated:

"I am currently writing an article about the dialogic process and the outcomes from utilizing Paideia Seminars to initiate a professional learning community. After answering this survey, I have been inspired to look at the data through a different lens and possibly write an article about how my study and the seminar topics reflected a commitment to social justice."

Another PhD graduate stated:

"This survey helped me to realize that year-round schooling really does have "So What" ramifications for the communities that surround my school

district. That's why I am planning to conduct community workshops on my dissertation."

An EdD graduate stated:

"Until completing this survey, I never even realized that my dissertation on home schooling had any implications for promoting justice and democracy in communities. But I know realize that my dissertation empower the community. Therefore, I will use my dissertation to erase the stereotypes about home schooling."

"I can't lie-I never really thought about it until reviewing this survey. After completing this survey, I now realize that I not have a moral obligation to use my study to add new thoughts and ideas to my school."

6. After participating in this study, how will you use your dissertation to promote a just and democratic society?

One-half of the PhD graduates concluded that they would promote justice and democracy by advancing knowledge and theories. One-half of the EdD graduates indicated that they would promote justice and democracy by applying a collaborative approach to addressing educational inequities. The other half of the PhD graduates and EdD graduates indicated that they were either unaware of or disinterested in the idea of using the dissertation to inspire a just and democratic society.

A sample PhD graduate response was:

"After completing this questionnaire, I will use my dissertation to develop a theoretical framework on how to understand student learning and modalities. I will then become one of the leading authorities in the field of teaching and learning."

A sample EdD graduate response was:

"This study has helped me to see that I can use my dissertation to inspire a just and democratic society. I believe that improving education requires everyone's input which includes finding ways to support students in an

environment conducive to learning and achieving academic success in an organized, structured curriculum that makes learning authentic."

Sample responses from the other PhD graduates and EdD graduates were:

"I do not plan on using my dissertation to inspire a just and democratic society. One reason is that I'm still not really sure what is meant by inspiring a just and democratic society. I think it contributes in bringing to light topics and discussions in terms of freedoms and facts associated therein. But I am uncertain beyond that."

"In spite of reflecting on this survey, I still can't help but reflecting on that the dissertation process was a very tiring process. Therefore, I am more concerned with recuperation than dissemination."

The findings to these responses showed that most of the doctoral graduates did not use their dissertations to promote social justice in their profession or community. This finding is furthered explained by the three emerging themes for the study. They are awareness of application, interest in application, and encouragement of application.

For example, the graduates responded to the first two questions by explaining their awareness of and interest in the just and democratic significance of their dissertations. The EdD graduates' responses may explain why they had the stronger preference for using their dissertations to engage in critical thought and reflection.

The responses to the third questions indicated that the students' textbooks and peers influenced them to realize the just and democratic significance of the educational administration. None of the graduates indicated that their professors helped them to arrive at this conclusion. This theme can also be seen in the graduates' responses regarding the role of the professor in encouraging in the process.

A small percentage of graduates indicated that their professors did encourage them to use their dissertations to promote a just and democratic society. This percentage could account for the number of survey returns that highlighted the use of the dissertation to promote a just and democratic

society. This percentage may also strengthen Delamont and colleagues' (2002) emphasis on the significance of the advisor-advisee relationship in negotiating the process. The results from the study suggest that many of the graduates may not have had close relationships with their advisors. Therefore, they may have not received any encouragement from their professors.

This notion may explain why the responses to the fifth and six questions indicated that most of the graduates were either unaware of or disinterested in the need to apply their dissertation towards promoting justice and democracy in society. Overall, these findings point to the current criticisms of educational administration programs.

Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) indicated that leadership preparation programs nominally address the social justice issues that will confront today's school leaders. They further indicated that leadership preparation programs must begin to provide students with a clear understanding of how the underlying values and beliefs of social justice will affect their ability to effect academic and social change in schools. Levine (2005) extended their thoughts with similar interpretations of leadership preparation programs.

In his scathing report "Educating School Leaders", Levine (2005) condemned leadership preparation programs' efforts to develop educational leaders. He referred to these programs as "inadequate to appalling" organizations that provide students with meaningless degrees for leading schools. Levine was especially critical of the doctoral programs of educational leadership. He reasoned that these programs should eliminate the EdD Degree. He further indicated that PhD degrees should be only awarded to students who are interested in serving as researchers and scholars in the field.

Because of the qualitative nature of this study, the findings are not generalizable to every doctoral program of educational administration. But they do show that a percentage of our students do not relate the dissertation experience to the fifth and sixth stages of Kohlberg's (1973) moral development theory. They also reiterate Kohlberg's (1973) indication of

how we move through some experiences with an underdeveloped sense of moral judgment.

Phase III—Moral Solutions

Stage Five: Conscientious Connections

NCPEA's current theme of "Knowledge Based Leadership" warrants the need to examine the knowledge based implications of the doctoral dissertation of educational administration. As an advocate of students and social justice, I respond to this call by introducing the dissertation's inherent integration of knowledge and morality. What follows is a subjective and sequential outline for developing the dissertation process in accordance to the two themes.

Proposed Stages of Moral Dissertation Development

Stage One—Logic Based Reflections. Pre Dissertation Stage (Dewey,1912) indicated that the classroom is the place that provides students with the knowledge to cure the ills of society. As such, doctoral classes of educational administration should consist of discussions and debates on how coursework activities relate to professions and society. These socially just experiences should also inspire students' selection of their topics for the dissertation.

Stage Two—Reflective Awareness. Dissertation Stage. During this stage, students must gain a clear understanding of the ethical and moral significance of their dissertations. Sternberg (1981) explained that students should be guided on conducting research in a manner that connects them to the sociopolitical status of people. As such, the doctoral dissertation of educational administration should empower students to conduct research that connects them to their subjects.

I believe that the dissertation committee must facilitate these efforts. Isaac, Quinlan, and Walker (1992) indicated that doctoral committees play a significant role in determining the quality of the dissertation experience. They indicated that the committee determines the organization of the content and influences students' feelings about the topic of interests. Their

research on dissertations showed a correlation between students' feelings about the dissertation experience and interactions with committee members. This finding reinforces the teacher's role in shaping the cognitive and affect domain of graduate students' beliefs (Giroux & McLaren, 1994). This finding also supports the notion of doctoral programs' considerable influence on students' views about school leadership (Harris, 2005).

Thus, doctoral committees of doctoral dissertations of educational administration should actively help students to realize the moral and socially just aspects of their work. They should begin this process during the proposal defense stage with the following questions:

- "How does your dissertation topic reflect the overall theme of coursework?"
- "Explain your dissertation topic's relevancy to your current professional place of employment?"
- "What are the just and democratic themes of your proposed topic of study?"
- "How do you plan to engage in postdoctoral use of your dissertation to improve your profession and community?"

The dissertation committee should also require and assist students with reflecting on the socially just implications of every chapter. In conducting the literature review, students should reflect on the socially just implications of previous scholars' reasons for connecting theories to society. Additionally, they should develop the methodology by connecting with their human subjects. They should also use the same approach to complete the remaining chapters and then prepare for using the study to educate other people. The committee should also sustain their efforts by modeling appropriate research techniques and investigations for students.

Stage Three—Academy of Altruism. Post Dissertation Phase - At this stage, graduates should transform the dissertation into a three part agenda for social justice. The first part should focus on scholarly activities. As newly minted scholars, graduates should present their research at conferences, symposia, and other public and professional venues. They should present the work in a manner that sparks morally driven discussions and debates about the issues related to the dissertation.

In addition, graduates should begin to conduct additional research on the interwoven themes of their dissertations. I believe that every dissertation has at least one article that could be written for publication. The graduates should also consult with their dissertation committees on how to best format the article for publication.

These actions lay the foundation for the social reform part of the agenda. John Dewey (1912) stated that education and knowledge can foster social reform by connecting people and society. As school leaders, doctoral graduates of educational administration are predisposed to fulfilling this obligation. As a former public school leader, I know that educators are required to provide people with knowledge that frees them from ignorance. Consequently, doctoral graduates of educational administration should ensure that their dissertations are used to guide others to towards societal uplift. Strategies should include but not be limited to:

- engaging others in informal discussions about their research;
- inspiring schools and communities to develop a common understanding of their dissertation topics; and
- educating others on how the topic can improve the profession and community.

The final part of this agenda is critical thinking. During the dissertation stage, students ponder hypotheses, theories, and how their findings from their study integrate these themes. As graduates, they should use this reflective thinking to guide their development of the first two parts of the agenda. They should continuously ask the following questions of themselves:

- "How does my dissertation relate to the needs and interests of my profession and public interest?"
- "How can I communicate the overall significance of my dissertation to the audiences of my profession and society?"
- "How can I use my dissertation to promote equity and fairness within the profession and community?"

In my opinion, these questions can provide them with the introspection to remain close to the moral and social significance of their dissertations.

Students could also see that the initial knowledge based passion for the topic can further drive their mission to connect theory and practice, research and rhetoric, and communities and schools.

Summary/Conclusion

The dissertation is a significant knowledge based component of doctoral programs of educational administration. But some members and students of the profession view the dissertation as a sedge way into higher pay and recognition in society. While the dissertation does symbolize power, privilege, and prestige, this unilateral value counters original value of the scholarly work.

Freire (1970) argued that social justice activism should reflect a committed search for and sharing of the truthful knowledge with other people. In due regard to Freire, the doctoral dissertation of educational administration is a truthful work that transcends the opportunity to earn higher pay and social prestige. The doctoral dissertation of educational administration should be used to effect knowledge based change in schools and community.

Doctoral students and professors can achieve this goal by viewing this scholarly work as dissemination of truth to other people. My doctoral committee used this view to add moral legitimacy to the dissertation experience. Likewise, other professors and I should render the same service to our doctoral students. That way, they could depart our programs with the knowledge based conscience to render conventional and unconventional justice and service to society.

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Author Biography

Dr. Mack T. Hines III is an author, assistant professor, consultant, and speaker. His areas of research interest are pre-service principals, family structure, adult learning theories, and the middle school transition. His work has been featured in publications such as Current Issues in Middle Level Education, NCPEA Yearbook, Advancing Women in Leadership, and the International Journal of Adult and Continuing Education.

Disrupting the Status Quo: The Action Research Dissertation as a Transformative Strategy

The Quality Practitioner of Educational Leadership

During the last decade there has been an ideological shift in defining and characterizing the notion of a quality practitioner of educational leadership. As a result of many critical conversations, some of which may or may not have involved educational practitioners themselves, there appears to be some agreement on the characteristics which are believed to best describe expertise in the practice of educational leadership at the beginning of the 21st century. "E]ducational leadership [has] be[gun] to embrace more organizational content: … not just running organizations but molding them for success" (Levin, 2006, p. 38). Contrary to past descriptions that emphasized staff supervision, management and discipline, current descriptions of leadership include the leader's capacity to influence and promote equity, equality and excellence in educational organizations. Most important is the leader's willingness to interrupt the status quo for the purpose of maximizing learning opportunities for all those involved the organization.

Educational leaders need to be able to reflect upon how the policies and practices embedded in the organization support or detract from every student's educational experience (Starratt, 1994). For instance, the argument is made that if leadership practitioners know how to listen to their

constituents and gather relevant organizational data, they will be able to collaborate with their educational partners in the organization and community to influence change that results in better educational outcomes for all students (Furman, 2002). More than ever before, educational leadership is being associated with student academic achievement. Firestone and Riehl, (2005) have recently published an edited book that resulted from an American Educational Research Association (AERA) and University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) taskforce charged with developing a research agenda on educational leadership. The main research questions addressed in this volume are: "How can educational leaders increase student learning, and how can they foster equity in educational outcomes?" (p. 1). However, Brown (2006a) argues that our current leadership preparation programs pay little, if any attention to the necessity of preparing educational leaders to engage in social justice or equity work.

Quality educational leadership practitioners, in collaboration with parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders, are challenged to seek the necessary skills to accomplish the tasks and responsibilities required of them. Leadership is a much more complex undertaking today than it was in the past. Leaders now need expertise in policy formation and implementation, deep knowledge of pedagogy and curriculum issues, expertise in fostering collaboration and teamwork and a sophisticated understanding of data collection and analysis. "Each [expectation] is complex and requires conceptual understanding as well as the ability to put knowledge into action in educational settings –'practical intelligence,' in the words of psychologist Robert Sternberg (1977)" (Levin, 2006, p. 38).

Much has been written that suggests leaders who become reflective practitioners advance in their practices and in building local and community capacity. Kowalski (2005) suggests that "in true professions," practitioners are expected to possess a "theoretical base for practice, technical skills required to apply theory, and the ability to engage in reflective practice" (p. 2). He goes on to define reflective practice as "the process by which the practitioner benefits from experience by integrating knowledge, skills, and experience" (p. 2). One can deduce that leaders who use critical reflection to take action in pursuit of knowledge and social change demonstrate the

essence of what Paulo Freire (1970) defined as praxis. "Practice is a reaction to the conditions existing in the outside world; it is experiential… . Praxis, on the other hand, is the combination of the external environment and the internal consciousness of the principal" (Wenglinsky, 2004, p. 33).

Thus, when an educational leadership practitioner acquires the skill of critical reflection, she has reached a major milestone in arriving at that cyclical, multifaceted, multilateral sphere of leadership. This description acknowledges the inherent understanding that true critical reflections involve aligning reflections to theory, forming critical inquiries about policy and practice, and taking informed action. Kowalski (2005) warns that this is not a simple task because "reflection does not occur naturally" (p. 3). Since effective (sustainable) reflective practice is influenced by adult experiences, adult learning theories, transformative theory, and emancipatory theory help us understand the process.

Mezirow (1991) argues that adult learning emphasizes "contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions, and validating meaning by assessing reasons" (p. 3). Embedded beneath the contexts of biographical, historical and cultural experiences are the justifications for what we know, think, believe, and feel, and our methods of making meaning of and about the environment that surrounds us. Since learning is predicated upon one's prior interpretations which form taken-for-granted assumptions and frames of references, changing and/or uncertain social interactions and/or experiences which present new meanings prompt adults to seek justifiable truths. In the absence of justifiable truths, adults seek agreement of reliable information sources before forming decisions about these new or challenging insights. Within this thinking process, or process of making meaning, adult learning takes place.

According to transformation theory, adults can change their points of view. Specifically, Mezirow (1991) explains that transformation theory is the process of "becoming critically aware of one's own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation" (p. 4). One of the goals of transformation theory is to aim the learning toward reflective processes that enable self-evaluation of one's values, beliefs and experiences. This process is crucial for change.

"Becoming critically reflective of one's own assumptions is the key to transforming one's taken-for-granted frame of reference, an indispensable dimension of learning for adapting to change" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 9).

Ironically, traditional educational preparation programs and the hierarchical structure of public schools tend to perpetuate compliance and maintenance of the status quo (Brown, 2006b). Thus, transformation theory and its product, transformative learning, aids leaders in understanding and developing the necessary skills and processes which encourage them to challenge the status quo. In essence, transformative learning helps leaders to deconstruct conformity to the many social and cultural canons which have permeated U.S. public schools to the detriment of many of our students. Quality educational practitioners understand that to maintain the status quo (of the existing social and cultural canons) is to "impede development of a sense of responsible agency" (Mezirow 1991, p. 8).

Important in the study of adult learning theory, particularly in reference to praxis, is the concept of emancipatory thinking brought on by transformation. Tennant (1998) describes evidence of transformative learning as a reaction that "incites a refusal to be positioned when the interests served are those of domination and oppression; and encourages alternative readings of the text of experience" (quoted in Mezirow 1991, p. 24).

To this point, much of our discussion has been about how adult learning theory promotes reflective thinking, stimulates potential for transformation, and emancipates one's thinking to the level of action. To prepare quality educational leadership practitioners who demonstrate those capacities, we suggest action research—a systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, counselors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or organizational environment for the purpose of gathering information about how their particular schools and/or districts operate (Mills, 2003). Moreover, because of the many active stakeholders involved in the daily operations of educating children, it is thought that participatory action research provides an opportunity for collaborative, democratic partnership in this process. Thus, action research can be emancipating because it empowers the participants to decide on the

research agenda, enact the research, evaluate the process, and to become beneficiaries of the outcome (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). This idea differs from conventional research because action research focuses upon "research in action, rather than research about action" (p. 4). Since the focus of the research is on the particular characteristics of the populations with whom a practice is employed or with whom some action must be taken, the results increase utility and effectiveness for the practitioner (Parsons & Brown, 2002). In essence, action research typifies a grassroots effort to find answers to important questions or to foster change. Most important, action research can support the call for transformative educational leadership practitioners to become "frontline civil rights workers in a long-term struggle to increase equity" (Moses & Cobb, 2002, in Brown, 2006b p. 701).

Background and Development of Action Research

Reason and Bradbury (2001) define action research as " [A] participatory democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview …" (p. 1). They go on to make the case that it is a systematic development of knowing and knowledge that differs from traditional academic research in its foundational underpinnings, but is no less rigorous or scientific in its approach. Put another way "[action research] uses a scientific approach to study the resolution of important social or organizational issues together with those who experience these issues directly" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 4). The contributions to knowledge and theory that emerge are based not only on the solutions to practical problems that are collectively arrived at, but also on the process of collaborative experimentation and on the intended and unintended consequences that emerge from the research. This approach to research makes sense in a program for part-time students who are employed in an organizational setting because they can study their own settings if they so choose.

Reason and Bradbury (2001) describe the origins of action research as residing in the teachings of Marx, Gramsci, Freire and others who were all engaged in changing social structures and practices for the benefit of those

who had been oppressed or marginalized by the status quo. They argue that action research draws on many theoretical frameworks and methodologies, but that the most fundamental worldview embraced by action research is a participatory one. This allows those who participate in an action research project to adopt the role of researcher. Together researcher and participants define or pose a problem that directly impacts their lives or work lives, and with careful, systematic processes determine some action or actions that can be taken to resolve it—to the betterment of those who are most directly affected by the problem. This action or intervention, sets action research apart from basic or traditional research or evaluation (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Proponents of action research argue that involving relevant others in an action research project leads to a strong sense of ownership of any proposed change. Opportunities for genuine community input align well with the idea of the quality leadership practitioner working together with others to disrupt the status quo in the interests of better serving all stakeholders.

Kurt Lewin, German social psychologist, who came to the United States in the early forties, is credited with first conceptualizing action research. Interested in social change, his early studies involved experimenting in natural settings rather than in laboratories. Following the dictates of the prevailing scientific theories of the time, these studies utilized a more positivist, experimental design than they do today. Greenwood and Levin (2007) make the point that Lewin's notion of action or intervention was short-term only. They believe that action research has evolved into a study of the continuous, participatory learning process undertaken by individuals in their natural (work or personal) settings. "The core idea [of action research] is to create sustainable learning capacities and to give participants increasing control over their own situations …" (p. 17).

Lewin stressed the importance of working with real problems in social systems, using iterative cycles of a well-defined research process that includes diagnosing a problem, planning, acting and evaluating the action, privileging the participant perspective, and retaining the importance of the relationship of theory to practice (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). Many varieties of action research or inquiry have developed since Lewin's time and have been given different names: action science, action inquiry, action

learning, participatory action research and cooperative inquiry to mention some of them. For the purposes of preparing the quality organizational leadership practitioner, we limit our discussion to action research and participatory action research here. While many authors prefer the use of the acronym AR to refer to action research and PAR to refer to participatory action research, we use the full terms.

Although educational researchers in the United States have been slow to embrace action research methodologies to understand district or building problems[footnote], much action research has been undertaken by social scientists working in corporate or non-profit organizational settings. Not only has a tradition emerged of consultants, researchers and organizational participants engaging in action research (see Chisholm, 2001; Senge & Scharmer, 2001; Schein, 2001 among many others), but a tradition of insider action research is also developing (see Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Herr & Anderson, 2005). Whether the research is designed and conducted by an outsider in collaboration with insiders or by an insider in collaboration with other insiders, the belief is that organizations gain most from this approach to change. Greenwood and Levin (2007) argue that "OL [organizational learning] and organizational development frameworks are the two important conceptual contributions to the body of social science knowledge that has emerged from AR" (p. 223). Thus, action research or participatory action research conducted in the interest of organizational learning seems to hold the most promise for the development of the practitioner of educational leadership.
A notable exception is Anderson, G., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A. (1994). Studying your own school. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

A useful distinction is made between first-person, second-person and third-person action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Marshall, 2001; Torbert, 2001). Torbert argues that leadership in an organization is enhanced by the capacity of individuals' adopting first and second-person research/practice that then leads to successful third-person research/practice. First-person action research involves the researcher's introspective inquiry into her own assumptions, motivations and values that prompt action— "listening through oneself both ways (toward origin and outcome) is the quintessential first-person research/practice" (p. 253,

parentheses in the original). Second-person action research necessarily extends to a dialogic exchange with other participants in the same organizational department, team or workgroup. Coghlan and Brannick (2005) advocate the integrative approach using first, second and third-person notions of audience and participants. Drawing on Reason and Marshall (1987), Coghlan and Brannick note that knowledge gained from action research can inform an individual's practice, provide valuable insights for groups as they work on projects, and can also transfer to similar sites. Grounded in the local context, action research, like other research conducted in the interpretive paradigm, is not generalizable beyond the study site, but if there is enough rich detail provided by the authors, others may learn from it.

The quality of action research depends on a number of factors. Most authors concur with Bradbury and Reason (2001), who offer the following choice-points and questions to guide quality.

Is the action research: Explicit in developing a praxis of relational-participation? Guided by reflexive concern for practical outcomes? Inclusive of a plurality of knowing? … .Worthy of the term significant? Emerging towards a new and enduring infrastructure? (p. 454)

One of the most important standards of quality is that the research must be practical. As will be discussed below, action research differs from basic research in precisely that respect. Moreover, there must be some intervention or action that occurs during the study, thus differentiating action research from evaluation or program evaluation, which usually takes place only after some action has been taken. Action researchers are interested in understanding as fully as possible what precedes action in the organizational setting to solve a particular problem with which organizational members are dealing, and what happens as a result of the action—and they should have some role in determining what intervention is decided upon. The intervention is shaped by those who are most affected by the issue under investigation. Unlike the experimental method in the positivist or post-positivist paradigm, the intervention is not designed for one group in comparison to another or other groups. There is no attempt to draw conclusions based on the concept of a "treatment." Instead, as the

above standards suggest, the emphasis is on the movement towards a workable solution that changes the activities or the infrastructure of the unit being studied. The study encompasses all the phases of problem definition, planning for action, taking action and evaluating the action.

Herr and Anderson, (2005) stress the importance of process validity. The way problems are framed and solved in the organization or unit should encourage the ongoing learning of the individual or the system. If the process is only partly inclusive of relevant stakeholders, for instance, the solutions will likely reinforce the conditions that led to the emergence of the problem in the first place. Underlying assumptions behind problem identification also need examination. The authors make the point that relationship building is a key element of the action research process and that democratic opportunities for input and critical analysis play an important role in the possible successful outcomes of the activity. Peer review of action research is another form of what Herr and Anderson call dialogic validity. There are many ways to achieve this. The action research itself can be a collaborative inquiry that is conducted with others throughout. This ensures multiple perspectives and a plurality of knowing. Action researchers can also provide peer review for each other to provide opportunities for critical and reflective dialogue.

Underlying all these criteria and standards is the belief that action research must be based on a sound and appropriate research methodology. Action researchers operate within a critical perspective grounded in the understanding that the action that is involved in some way transforms practice in the organization. This seems most appropriate for the quality educational leadership practitioner who needs to facilitate new practices and policies designed to disrupt the status quo to achieve greater equity in educational outcomes for students.

The Action Research Capstone Experience

If transformative learning is to be fostered in educational leadership preparatory programs, then it is imperative that instructional approaches and learning experiences be designed to support this type of learning. We argue in this section that the action research dissertation is an essential component in any educational leadership curriculum that aspires to foster

the critical, reflective learning that is the hallmark of human and organizational transformation.

We believe an action research dissertation is desirable in EdD programs in order to (a) more clearly differentiate the EdD from the PhD. and the form that dissertation research takes in the PhD., (b) increase the level of rigor in thinking and depth of critical reflection and (c) prepare leaders of educational organizations that have the knowledge, skills, and qualities of mind needed to disrupt the status quo in their organizations and in the broader systems of education.

The EdD and PhD.

To accomplish the above, we believe it is helpful to craft an EdD with a focus on transformative practice that is clearly differentiated from a PhD. that emphasizes the preparation of traditional researchers. The EdD can become the degree in which the tension between theory and practice can be put to generative use in the production of knowledge that is valid, useable, and transformative in local, context-bound settings. Rather than separating thought from action and depending on specially orchestrated translational competencies [that have become, for example, separate programmatic foci in the biomedical sciences (Zerhouni, 2005)] as basic research does, action research links research, action, theory and local knowledge to transform existing conditions (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Instead of acquiring knowledge for its own sake (the purpose of basic or even applied research conducted in most education PhD. dissertations), action research focuses on generating knowledge that is workable, makes sense, and is credible in more than one setting (Greenwood & Levin). Further, unlike traditional research, action research does not place the doctoral student as researcher in an external, "objective" role, with little if any responsibility or obligation for how the knowledge generated might be used in practice. Rather, whether acting as insider or outsider in action research, the doctoral student is by definition and obligation linked to the practice setting and to others in that practice setting to collaboratively explore whether the cycles of interventions chosen actually work to change the problematic situation to which the research project is addressed. Thus, the action researcher must be concerned with the workability of the knowledge generated from her

research rather than depend on other specially trained persons (including education faculty members) to translate findings for use in practice. The student must also take on the mantle of collaborator, rather than authoritative leader, as she engages others in the design of research and the application of its findings. And the student must also come to know herself as leader and be prepared to critically reflect on and change her own values and assumptions about leadership if her research experiences so dictate.

This is not to argue against the PhD. or the value of basic or traditional research. Basic research is needed to provide a counterpoint of theory to the local knowledge of organizational participants with whom the action researcher works to generate new knowledge—that which is workable in the particular context and beyond (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). However, each degree teaches a different kind of practice—one focuses on the generation of knowledge and theory for its own sake or for translation and/or application by persons other than the researcher(s); the other on the co-generation of workable knowledge to transform institutions. It is the latter which we believe is the appropriate focus of an EdD to prepare transformative educational leadership practitioners. We suggest an EdD program that prepares students to be critical consumers of all kinds of research, but expert researchers of their own or similar settings.

In an effort to differentiate the EdD from the PhD. some have been tempted by the use of projects rather than dissertation research for a capstone experience, since, as the argument goes, other professional degrees (e.g., law and medicine) do not require research. However, as we have argued earlier, we believe that an essential competency of a quality educational leadership practitioner is the capacity to engage in research that fosters organizational learning and transformation. Leading "… is about action and has consequences" (Cervero & Wilson, 2006, p. 261). Action research helps leaders learn about action and interrogate the consequences of their acts. We believe that class projects, limited as they normally are in scope and in time commitments, are simply insufficient for the training of educational leaders who must daily confront ambiguous, challenging, and often "wicked" (Rittel & Webber, 1973) organizational problems and situations. Rigorous, organization-based participatory action research requires a level of

engagement and the use of a composite of knowledge and skills that exceed that demanded of class projects, even those that are team-based.

Limits of Class and Team Projects

We believe that critical, transformative learning normally does not occur as a result of class or team projects. Despite their innovative character, projects (even team ones), are insufficient substitutes for the action research capstone we are recommending. We have come to this conclusion for three reasons. First, in research conducted by one of us (Donaldson & Scribner, 2003; Scribner & Donaldson, 2001) it has been found that most of the reflection achieved in team projects is instrumental at best. The constraints of time and the influence of prior socialization do not support the type of critical reflection that is required for transformative learning. Students, driven to complete projects within a semester or even less time, tend to revert to the administrative and leadership structures and conventions they have learned and developed in traditional academic settings and especially in the workplace. Even when carefully designed, team projects have the tendency to reproduce existing managerial and instrumental conventions of educational administration rather than foster the amount and depth of critical reflection required to genuinely change the way students lead. The field is therefore faced with the ironic possibility that programs that utilize team projects as central organizing features may very well produce outcomes that are contrary to those intended.

Second, team projects are seldom conducted within the organization in which students work. By using team projects we reinforce the value of assuming an outsider role for our students and give them practice in performing only that role. Team projects emphasize the values of students assuming the stance of objective observers and authorities who study a situation and recommend actions for others to take—actions to which students attach little meaning and actions for which outcomes are irrelevant for the student. We do this when our real focus should be on helping students become critically reflecting actors and leaders within their own settings where they are challenged by context and often bounded by political realities.

Third, the above discussion highlights a fundamental flaw in Levine's (2005) recommendation that the EdD be eliminated in favor of an M.B.A.-like master's degree for the preparation of school leaders. To explore his recommendation in more depth, we conducted a literature review on the M.B.A., focusing on standards for accreditation and mention of research as a requirement of the M.B.A. We also conducted an Internet search of the top 20 ranked M.B.A. programs in the U.S.A. (as ranked by U.S. News and World Report), accessed the website of each of these ranked programs, and made note of how these programs and their capstone experiences were structured. We found that most programs used group- and case-based instruction in courses, and had capstone experiences that were either (a) seminars dealing with some focal aspect of business or an emphasis of the particular program (such as international business or globalization) or (b) team consultancy projects in which students worked in teams to address a problem in a firm in which few if any of the students worked. Little mention was made of research as a central or organizing component of M.B.A. programs. Thus, Levine's (2005) recommendation for an M.B.A.-like program for the preparation of educational leaders is vacuous in terms of research, action, and transformation. Rather, his recommendation, if understood in light of the M.B.A. as a curricular model, strikes us to be a recommendation to simply reproduce a group of managers, trained in techniques, who serve the status quo rather than developing a set of individuals who can lead and foster the kind of human and organizational transformation that is required to achieve genuine reform of our educational systems.

This again is not to argue against the use of class- and team-based projects in EdD programs. Team-based projects are a valid and effective strategy for providing students with much needed and relatively low-risk and authentic experiences of leading and working in teams. Yet, teamwork outside the context of action research seldom provides for the level of engagement, collaboration, and practice of rigorous research required of a transformative educational leader. Nor do team projects often offer the opportunity and time needed for deep, critical reflection necessary to explore the influence of one's leadership approach on others and on effecting change within an organization where the knowledge and action outcomes really count. We

believe that action research offers the potential for this type of learning experience.

The Leaders We Need

We have argued that we need leaders who have the capacity to reflect critically on their own practice, transform their practice, and in so doing work democratically with others in their organizations to disrupt the status quo—to achieve organizational equity and equality among organizational actors and for the people that the organization serves. We believe that an action research dissertation, more than most other learning experiences, has the potential for achieving this outcome. The philosophical foundations that undergird action research as a democratically driven, mutual, co-generative activity incorporate the values and dimensions that Burns (1978) first highlighted as central to transformative leadership values, morals, and mutuality of effect in raising leaders and followers above self-interests. Transformative leadership requires democratic collaboration and an understanding of what it means to lead collaboratively and relationally rather than authoritatively.

Action research, as an approach, draws upon multiple methodologies and research tools and therefore does not privilege one research paradigm. Rather, action research requires leaders to be skilled in a range of social science research practices that can be brought to bear to address educational and organizational problems. The knowledge created through action research can be liberating (Greenwood & Levin, 2007) since the action research process is consistent with Freire's (1970) notion of "conscientization," in which participants in the research process become critically aware of the political and structural boundedness of their situations and can act to rectify the asymmetrical power relations that often create and support that boundedness. Thus, action research is potentially radical in its stance and effect. By engaging in action research and gaining the knowledge, skills, and sensitivities it requires, leaders are prepared to act as real change agents with others in their own organizations. Very simply, we believe action research contributes to the development of the kind of educational leaders we need today. Our next section provides an
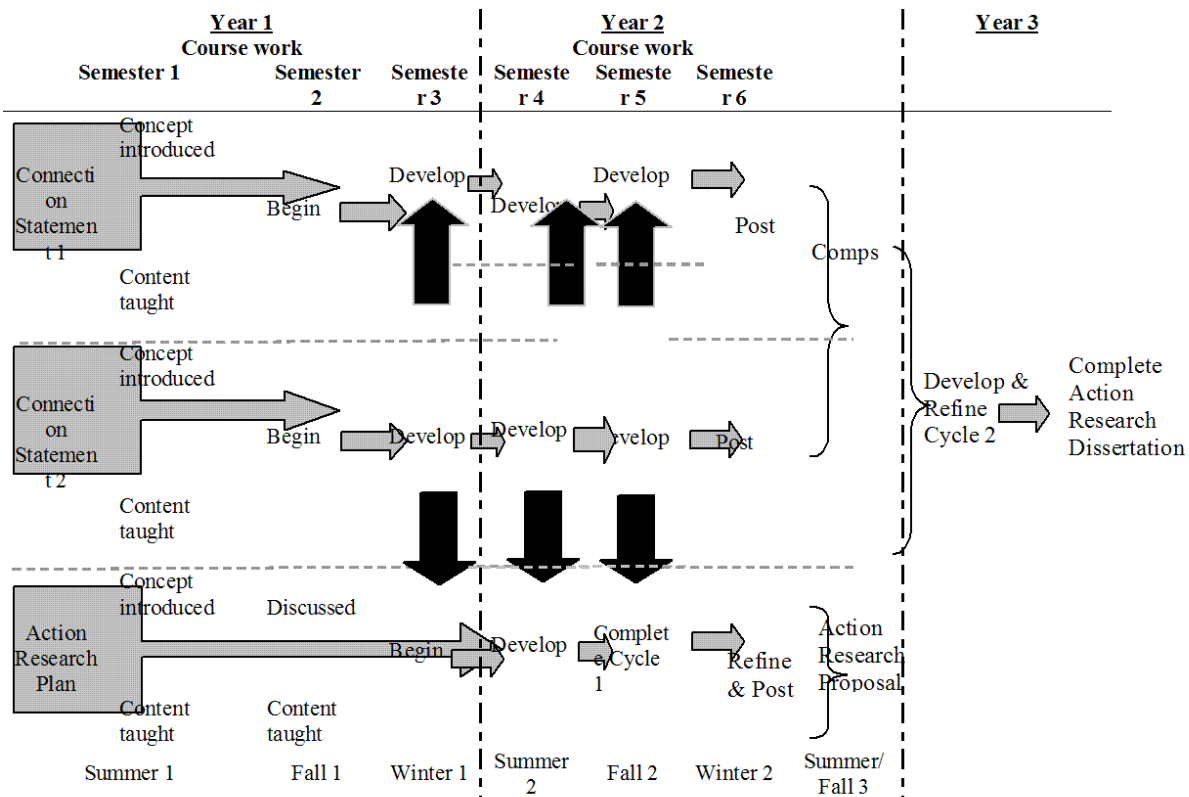
example of how action research might be incorporated into a EdD program that includes two years of course work.

A Professionally Anchored Capstone for an EdD in Educational Leadership[footnote]
These ideas extend the current use of portfolios in the Missouri Statewide Cooperative EdD Program in Educational Leadership.

The following is an example of how a capstone research experience might originate in EdD coursework based upon the principles and discussion outlined earlier in this chapter. Each doctoral candidate, who is also a practicing educational leader, would be encouraged to complete the study over the course of, say, three years. The students would be provided with an electronic portfolio space to facilitate the process. This model assumes part-time study and full-time employment. To best develop this kind of capstone experience (dissertation), the first cycle of an action research process would become an integral part of the coursework and the second cycle would be conducted at the end of the coursework (see Figure 1).

During the two years of coursework, within the required Research/Inquiry classes, students would upload into their portfolios two reflection papers, referred to as Connection Statements, containing supporting documents referred to as Artifacts (examples of practices the student has engaged in offered as illustrations of growing understanding of theories and research). The connection statements encourage candidates to connect ideas from the scholarship across content. Connection statements also provide candidates with the opportunity to reflect on their practice through the lens of theory and research. Candidates would draw on both the faculty-defined core knowledge and the supplemental knowledge they have gained that will be needed to complete their Action Research Plan, which would be developed during coursework. The core knowledge is grounded in themes such as Leadership Theory and Practice; Organizational Analysis; Content and Context for Learning and Research Methods. The Action Research Plan would be a third document to be included in the portfolio. Student-identified problems to be addressed in the Action Research Plan would emerge from the problems-of-practice curriculum. (See Figure 1)

Year 1
Course work

Semester 1 Semester 2 Semester 3 Semester 4 Semester 5 Semester 6

Year 2
Course work

Year 3

Concept introduced
Connection Statement 1
Begin
Content taught
Develop
Develop
Develop
Post
Comps

Concept introduced
Connection Statement 2
Begin
Content taught
Develop
Develop
Develop
Post

Develop & Refine Cycle 2

Complete Action Research Dissertation

Concept introduced
Discussed
Action Research Plan
Content taught
Content taught
Begin
Develop
Complete Cycle 1
Refine & Post
Action Research Proposal

Summer 1 Fall 1 Winter 1 Summer 2 Fall 2 Winter 2 Summer/Fall 3

In their own work settings, students would have the opportunity of learning how to use action research to address one or more of the problems they identify together with relevant colleagues during course work. Faculty feedback and candidate reflection would shape this plan. Ultimately, the Action Research Plan would become an Action Research Project serving as the capstone project. Thus, the fourth document included as part of the completed portfolio would be the write-up of the Action Research Project (or dissertation,) which would be completed within the year following coursework. These dissertations would be based on at least two iterations of the action research cycle in which the student diagnoses the situation confronted in his/her organization using preunderstanding of that situation informed by theory; plans an intervention in the organization; implements the intervention; and then studies the results of the intervention (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005).

A professionally anchored capstone does not fit neatly into pre-determined chapters. It flows and evolves as action research cycles spiral across time. It focuses on problems of practice and produces information for use. It requires inquiry into effective, research-based practice and appropriate

theory. In this way, students can acquire the requisite knowledge and develop the necessary cognitive and action research skills to become critically reflective professionals and skillful scholar leaders who are prepared to participate with others to make relevant organizational change in the interests of those who have been less well served by the status quo.

This proposed capstone experience would require a particular kind of advisor-student relationship. The advisor would not only support the student in his/her research projects, but would also assist the student to reflect on deeply held beliefs and personal theories about leadership practice and the organizations in which they work. We believe that this capstone experience also calls for a different type of committee than one normally appointed for PhD. candidates. Herr and Anderson (2005) argue that dissertation chairs and committee members need to understand that the action researcher likely has multiple roles in the project—as researcher, as insider or familiar outsider, as administrator, employee or consultant. And they must be able to offer appropriate methodological and epistemological approaches to the study. "Action research is a messy, somewhat unpredictable process, and a key part of the inquiry is a recording of decisions made in the face of this messiness" (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 78). Thus, advisors should also have opportunities to instruct in the program that prepares students to undertake this kind of research.

To accomplish the task of weaving action research methodology and skills throughout the program, advisors and committee members would have to be well versed in action research and adult learning approaches to knowledge generation. Advisors and committee members would have to be sensitive to the political, interpersonal, ethical, and institutional realities within which the student conducts action research. Finally, the committee should have as the outside member an educational leader from an organization that is very similar to the organization in which the student is conducting his/her research—but not from the same organization. The latter would raise possible conflict of interest issues and might prevent students from reporting the research as accurately as they should. The outside committee member would be responsible for ensuring that the actions of the student are appropriate to the leadership context in which the action research plan is implemented.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have suggested that an EdD program focused on the transformative practitioner is one approach to prepare quality educational leaders for the challenges they face leading schools and districts today. To make this case, we have articulated our beliefs that such leaders need to acquire reflective skills, critical thinking skills and knowledge of transformative practices. These beliefs are predicated on the knowledge that our educational systems across the country have not benefited all students to date. Poverty, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual identification or perceived identification, religious affiliation, disability, and other markers of diversity often negatively influence the academic achievement and social well-being of students in our schools (Grogan, 2005). As Reyes and Wagstaff (2005) put it, "… the leadership ability and leadership values of the principal [and superintendent] determine in large measure what transpires in a school [or district] and what transpires in a school [or district] either promotes and nourishes or impedes and diminishes student academic success" (p. 102, parentheses added).

To help prepare leaders who can critically assess the extent to which the policies and practices in their organizations promote and nourish student academic achievement and social well-being, we have suggested including an action research component in an EdD program. Not only can action research (and particularly participatory action research) offer the opportunities for students to learn how to work collaboratively with others to effect such organizational change, but, as we have proposed, action research embedded in coursework may also provide a way to design a professional EdD degree in contrast to a PhD. that is more focused on preparing academic researchers.

Educational leadership preparation has come under intense scrutiny in the past few years. The suggestions in this chapter might address the concern that we do not produce high quality educational leadership graduates in institutions of higher education (Levine, 2005). Although we know that many of our graduates are doing stellar work in the field despite this criticism, we believe that a doctoral-level preparation experience more focused on transformative leadership could be very helpful. More

important, it offers us a good chance of redefining graduate educational leadership preparation

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THE QUALITATIVE DISSERTATION: STILL HAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

I recall my qualitative dissertation study of leadership succession completed in the early 1980s for which the data sources were non-participant observations, interviews, and documents. My advisor and chair was an assistant professor in a department generally open to but not evenly expert in qualitative methodology. Other students warned me to pursue a more concretely manageable and quantitative study, but I, along with two other brave students, chose the seemingly more formidable qualitative journey. We faced perceived and real obstacles related to our choices that the quantitative focused students did not. Selection of committee members was tricky; getting through the Institutional Review Board proved complicated.

Finding similar studies as models for the literature review was daunting. In addition to complications in the processes, the time that full immersion in the data collection and analysis differed from the time that the quantitative studies took. Much of their conceptualization and theoretical structure was in place before data collection began while our sensitizing framework was still emerging, and we were still immersed (sometimes it felt like more like wallowing) in the data with "sensitizing frameworks" that guided our data collection without limiting constant comparative possibilities. Although we experienced the dissertation journey differently than many of those students who pursued quantitative studies, we maintained our energy and focus with mutual support and the sustaining belief that we were pioneers forging the way for qualitative studies in education leadership.

Indeed many qualitative studies in the field have followed, and acceptance of qualitative papers for presentation and publication has definitely increased in the 1990s (Hausman, 2001). Yet when chairing dissertation committees in the late nineties, I found the qualitative dissertation study in many ways still hazy and elusive to both students and professors alike. I wondered why this haziness persisted and began to systematically explore the methodological context of academe as well as the perceptions that shape and inform chairing as well as writing the qualitative dissertation. Given the long history of qualitative research in the social sciences, one would assume that the pursuit of a qualitative dissertation study has become

commonplace. Why did I sense that shallow understandings of qualitative inquiry as well as a lack of shared language persist? I attribute this phenomenon in part to the iterative nature of qualitative method and misleading perceptions about effort and rigor among students and faculty. Also, the consistent use of the traditional language of quantitative investigation seemed to further confound full acceptance and embrace of qualitative dissertations.

To explicate and make transparent these hazy elements of qualitative dissertations, I review the current socio-political context of academe and how certain trends in research foci and methodology influence the work of scholars. I also reflect on and synthesize my own experience as a qualitative researcher and dissertation advisor with experiences of others through a review of the literature on writing qualitative studies and dissertations. Those experiences explain the "author's path" or story (Boyatzis, 1998, p. xiv) and "way of seeing" themes in the experience over time (p.1). Vignettes of my experiences illustrate that story, indicated by italics with names and specifics altered for confidentiality. My experiences are compared to what others have learned, offering implications and suggestions for negotiating the hazy "fog" that can surround the qualitative dissertation process.

Considering Context

The influence of social and political context on trends in research and scholarship has contributed to the haziness surrounding qualitative dissertation studies. Recent national trends in defining what "counts" as scientific investigation, favor large-scale studies that are viewed as more generalizable, and, therefore, more immediately applicable to other educational settings. Other studies, single subject, self study or personal narrative, naturalistic inquiry and even some case studies, seem less favored in the current climate. The report of the National Research Council (2002), the American Educational Research Association (AERA) (2004) response to the report as well as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2004), characterize the debate and its potential impact on scholarly activities, including the proclivity for certain kinds of research methods to be favored over others.

In 2002, the National Research Council, a nationally representative group of scholars from several different fields of study, created a Committee on Scientific Principles for Education Research that prepared a report listing six scientific principles for maintaining quality in research. These principles call for increased rigor in research using language that exposes the committee's predisposition to traditional methods and language of quantitative, large-scale studies: (1) Pose significant questions that can be investigated empirically; (2) Link research to relevant theory; (3) Use methods that permit direct investigation of the question; (4) Provide a coherent and explicit chain of reasoning; (5) Replicate and generalize across studies, and (6) Disclose research to encourage professional scrutiny and critique (National Research Council, 2002, pp. 3-5). The language of the report does acknowledge the choice of research method appropriate to the question as well as the need for rigor, but does not acknowledge the situated, constructivist nature of the report itself. Similarly, the NCLB Act uses language that calls for measurable results, defined in quantitative terms, and also encourages large-scale studies (USDOE, 2004) as the likely recipients of federal funding for research.

Many scholars claim that the language in these documents favors "traditional, experimental scientific inquiry in educational research, policy, and practice, radically narrowing the scope of what counts as quality and rigor" (Mullen & Fauske, 2006, p. 1). Specifically responding to this report, several authors argue that the new trends in defining scientific investigation are decidedly anti-postmodernism and ignore innovative, alternative forms of research:

Some social scientists argue that the "scientific nature" of research has been debased, resulting largely from the overpowering of social and critical inquiry by conventions of scientific investigation (e.g., Eisner, 1997; Feuer, Towne, & Shavelson, 2002). The ensuing tension has been exacerbated by the definitions of research appearing in highly influential governmental works. Reactions have ranged from skepticism (Berliner, 2002), to critique (English, 2004), to fear (St. Pierre, 2002). Controversy will likely become even more vehement with the new federal pronouncements of what "counts" as legitimate inquiry in education. Calls for conceptual diversity in educational scholarship (Eisner, 1999; English, 2004) embody the growing

unease with empiricism, modernism, and structuralism as paradigms restricting educational scholarship (Mullen & Fauske, 2006, p. 2).

This trend can have a particularly restrictive influence on educational and related research in the social sciences where the study of human behavior is of primary importance. Becher (1989) compares this swinging pendulum of research falling in and out of favor to fashion trends that are set by designers, rendering some styles more popular and acceptable than others, regardless of how well they fit the wearers. Similarly, "individual expressions and alternative styles are hence rendered unpopular and even objectionable; alternative voices and innovative research [are] deemed 'unauthorized' in light of trend-setting governmental publications" (Mullen & Fauske, 2006, p. 3). The AERA Executive Committee responded to the National Research Council's six principles by supporting greater rigor in educational research while also arguing for greater inclusiveness of varied methodology, noting the "multiple components of quality research, including well-specified theory, sound problem formulation, reliance on appropriate research designs and methods, and integrity in the conduct of research and the communication of research findings" (AERA Resolution, 2003, p. 1). The AERA endorsement of alternative, more qualitative research methodologies is reflected in an analysis of the Division A Annual meeting program for 2000, revealing that more than half of the accepted papers/presentations were studies using qualitative methods (Hausman, 2001). Therefore, the premier educational research organization stepped out to challenge the National Research Council's narrowly focused guidelines for what constitutes rigorous research in education; such a step has implications for doctoral students and faculty in educational leadership both in practice and in rhetoric.

The influence of national trends can and does impact the choice of both topic and method for dissertations and emerging research agendas. These national developments illustrate the prevalence of traditional views and language of research that often accompany quantitative methodology: investigation, replication, generalizability across studies, and more. Conversely, the language of qualitative methodology appears rarely in these reports: inquiry, description, case study, etc. This observation is indicative of the persistence of the quantitative-oriented paradigm that is exacerbated

by the plethora of terms related to qualitative inquiry and the lack of common understanding of those terms: ethnography, personal narrative, naturalistic inquiry, case study, participant and non-participant observation, grand tour versus selective interviews, situated perspectives, self as researcher, researcher biases, etc. The "thickness" and complexity of the qualitative paradigm confounds the ready acceptance that comes from shared understandings in a linguistic community of scholars (Young, 1990). The choice of qualitative method is further complicated by "the complexity and ambiguity surrounding the multiple, simultaneous processes of doing qualitative research and of being the research instrument" (Meloy, 2002, p. 182). It is no wonder that haziness around qualitative methodology persist.

Numerous questions for faculty and students emerge from these considerations, such as: Will research agendas, including choice of methods, subtly align with national guidelines and will alternative topics and methods choices be diminished? What might be the professional consequences of pursuing what some consider substandard inquiry? How might the peer review processes for grants and journal publication be influenced, particularly regarding disenfranchised voices in their quest to be heard? How will these trends influence the socialization of doctoral students as scholars into the profession?

How Context Shapes Doctoral Studies

Clearly, the context in which doctoral students find themselves currently can shape their choices of topic and method both subtly and directly. When the top scholars and authors in education are writing on certain topics, this in turn shapes the national research agendas through journal publication and peer review. Research agendas for both individuals and entire fields of study can be shaped by a few reviewers (Becher, 1998). Certain topics can easily become marginalized through various peer review functions in academe, and marginalized voices in education often include those "new to the profession, persons of color, women, disabled persons, non-speakers of English, and international citizens" (Mullen & Fauske, 2006, p. 5). Although dissertation writing differs from writing for publication, these national trends still can influence the focus of doctoral studies. Often doctoral students work with faculty or groups of faculty and student

researchers that have received grants—the focus of the grants themselves may have been determined by the sources of funds available. Most productive faculty regularly submit manuscripts for review with the hope of realizing publication and resulting influence in their fields. If researchers seek out funding that is predisposed to certain topics and/or kinds of research, then it follows that publications will be related to those predisposed topics and methods. If small scale, non-replicable studies with limited generalizability are not the "in vogue" topics and/or do not receive funding, the likelihood of publication is diminished. Thus, the socio-political context in which we work as scholars may have contributed to the continued haziness that surrounds the qualitative dissertation. We are fortunate that the AERA has taken a stand to protect alternative choices.

Ambiguity and Qualitative Methodology

I interpret these socio-political, contextual factors as they unfold in my professional lived experience. As a professor in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, I am fortunate to have worked with colleagues who respect and embrace qualitative methods, even those who are predisposed to quantitative inquiry. My reputation as a qualitative researcher in education leadership and teacher of qualitative methods has drawn certain students to me over time, just as it has repelled or redirected students to faculty who favor quantitative methods. I eventually found myself chairing almost exclusively qualitative dissertations, with an occasional mixed method design. Three kinds of students, with a few variations, have been drawn to me repeatedly, vary as a potential dissertation chair: (1) those who are intimidated by statistics or quantitative approaches generally, (2) those who perceive that qualitative methods are easier or more palatable, and (3) those who approach their learning and their work naturally through a qualitative lens. Students in the last category seem to achieve the best "fit" between their naturally occurring questions and their chosen method. The notion of a "good fit" between the dissertation chair, the choice of research topic, the appropriate method or methods, and the students themselves present an ambiguous and perplexing problem—a mini study in itself.

The true motivation of some students is often obtuse, both to me and to themselves. The first question that I ask a doctoral student who comes to

me for advice about dissertation studies is "what are you passionate about in your studies?" I believe that passionate inquiry can sustain the intense effort that goes into a rigorous qualitative study. However, a student's passion can also detract from a strong study. I have served on dissertation committees in which the student neither moved away from nor fully embraced a stance of advocacy for their study. The former, taking an unacknowledged stance of advocacy, often leads to under analysis and/or over interpretation of data—to selectively choosing data to support one's stance. This kind of unacknowledged advocacy typically indicates a lack of understanding of qualitative methods, a lack of knowledge about self as researcher, and a lack of rigor in data analysis. Conversely, formally acknowledging bias and stance in qualitative research and clearly delineating limitations of analyses and findings is a means for students to frame their passion in a way that can enhance the study, as long as it does not blind the student to possible interpretations of the data. Unintentionally straddling the "advocacy fence" dilutes the power of the study design and diminishes the importance of self as researcher (Berg & Smith, 1988). Indeed, understanding the self as the instrument of research is essential to maintaining rigor in the qualitative dissertation.

Assuming that the student identifies a guiding research question, probably not fully developed at this point, I then probe the student to think about what kinds of data can answer the question. I listen for language that indicates a disposition toward curiosity, inquiry, and description rather than toward advocacy. If the question is stated in more of a hypothesis mode, I challenge the student to think about possible data sources. In the typical backward fashion that I learned from my own chair and others that I have observed, I guide students to think about the proposed study—question first, method second. When it becomes clear that a survey or other quantitative data can most readily provide the answers, most students realize that quantitative methods are a better choice. Interestingly, some students begin to rethink their question, trying to force it to be more qualitative. I have found this response quite intriguing and very telling about the student's level of understanding of and proclivity toward qualitative methods. Rarely, can a student reformulate their hypothesis into a guiding research question and convince me that his or her research question truly is framed in fix minds as a qualitative study. Mostly, this step

reveals to both of us that another choice of both method and chair is advisable. Ultimately, the fit among the student, chair, topic and method must synergistically propel the dissertation study. Inherent tensions among these factors can lead to impasses and roadblocks in an already intense and stressful situation.

Carlos, a higher education student, came to me with a request that I chair his dissertation committee. He wanted to study the effectiveness of math tutoring for entering freshmen in College Algebra. He insisted that the only effective way to collect the data that could answer this question to his satisfaction was to interview random students who attended the tutoring over a given semester. His goal was to be able to recommend effective practices for supporting the learning and retention of incoming freshman. The first draft of the proposal outlined a plan for snowball sampling as a non-participant observer who sat in the tutoring lab for a specified number of days interviewing any student who came in for math tutoring. After talking with him for some time, he acknowledged that recording the number and the focus of each student's visits might help answer his question. He further noted that frequency of visits could be related to positive or negative perceptions of tutoring as could its effectiveness be shown in raising test scores and grades. He also realized that his passion for retaining freshmen through programs of this kind went well beyond the math tutoring to include all efforts at facilitating the freshman experience. Consequently, he refocused his question more broadly and, in the end, completed a mixed method study that assessed support programs for entering freshmen as well as perceptions of the freshman about those programs through both interview and survey. He blended well the methods and data sources that were most appropriate to answering the research question of his study.

I am not suggesting that these questions and concerns are peculiar to qualitative studies, but I do maintain that they may be more troublesome and pronounced than with quantitative dissertation studies. I liken the quantitative dissertation to an expedition where a great deal of preparation occurs; maps, equipment, and supplies are amassed prior to embarking. The qualitative dissertation reminds me more of an odyssey for which some preparation is made, but probably not enough to anticipate every surprise

encounter or pitfall. The enjoyment of the journey clearly depends on the expectations and temperament of the traveler.

Stages of the Qualitative Dissertation

Students looking at the typical time it takes to complete the dissertation study and perceiving that the qualitative dissertation may extend that timeframe can easily discern the likelihood of taking longer than their classmates to graduate. There is no place on the diploma that shows the amount of time each student spends on the dissertation study. Yet, seeing students choose studies on the consideration of time alone is troubling. I am not convinced that qualitative studies inherently take longer to complete than do their quantitative counterparts. I am convinced, however, that there are no guarantees about how long immersion and saturation of data will take. The key is in good research design with a meaningful research question. I have seen too many students lose their passion and interest for a study that is not genuinely engaging to them. I believe that in the end it is the innate curiosity and passion for learning that carries most students though the dissertation no matter what the method. Instrumentalism, getting "done" quickly, can sustain one for awhile; if the study becomes drudgery, an act of suppression of passion, it can easily become not "doable."

Students can benefit from seeing the dissertation process as a series of steps or stages that explain the process. Brause (2000) outlines eight stages in the doctoral process with the last four focused on beginning and completing the dissertation. Although delineating these stages can help students to see the "cycle" of completing a doctoral program as a whole, the four dissertation focused stages are misleadingly succinct and discrete: "p. 58) stage 5 Select, dissertation topic, chair and committee; Stage 6 Draft dissertation proposal; Stage 7 Conduct, analyze and write; and Stage 8 Prepare for defense and revise dissertation" (Brause, 2000, p. 59). The timeframe suggested for completing the dissertation is 12 to 36 months (p. 59), obviously allowing for more involved or complex studies, but no specific differentiation for qualitative studies appears in the timeframe.

Piantinada (1999) offers stages of qualitative dissertation writing not tied to time: beginning phase (up to proposal), middle stage (living with the data), ending phase (more living with the study and public discourse), and

transitional phase (life after the dissertation). These phases, which are inherently qualitative, help students understand the process of the dissertation outside the parameters of time. Indeed, predicting the time needed for each stage is precarious and, in many ways, antithetical to the notion of the qualitative experience. Not only do perceptions of time influence the choice of a qualitative dissertation study, there are also implications for committee processes and differences in the ways that students complete the study.

Committee Coordination Part 1: Navigating the "Fog" of Relationships

Numerous researchers offer observations and advice on committees and the relationships between students and committee members (Piantinada & Garman, 1999; Brause, 2000; Mullen, 2006; Schneider, 1998). The discussion ranges from techniques for choosing committee members and the chair to examples of abusiveness to students. Brause, for example, notes the power differential that is inherent in the relationship between students and committee chairs and that the completion of the dissertation signals a rite of passage from student to colleague that received mixed reactions from faculty. At least in part, the consternation for students can stem from a shift in the responsibility for learning from the professors to the student (Brause, 2000; Piantinada & Garman, 1999). In courses and qualifying examinations, professors take the lead in identifying foci and assessing progress. In the dissertation, the student must take that lead, ultimately becoming an independent learner with his or her own area of expertise. Chairs can guide the development of independence, "letting go" at the appropriate time. Some faculty members encourage the transitions and may continue working with the student on scholarly presentations and publications (Mullen, 2006). Other faculty resist the transition, adopting the perspective that "once a student always a student" (Brause, 2000, p. 58). The student is indeed at the mercy of the committee and especially the chair for the duration of the dissertation process. Their responses and "shepherding" of the student can shape a productive passage or a highly stressful episode (Fauske, 2001). In the extreme, students can drop out of programs, abandoning years of work, or, more horrifying, student can commit suicide over harsh feedback from their dissertation chairs (Schneider, 1998).

Jane came to me in a committee change midstream in her dissertation when her chair accepted a position at another university. At the proposal preparation stage and technically not far enough along to justify her chair completing the dissertation from afar, she was understandably anxious. She seemed to experience the change as a loss. She and the previous chair had been committed to an interview and observation study of study of organizational change, but the design of the study remained hazy even though they had been working on it for several months. The previous chair's and my styles differed, and it became clear that I gave feedback in a more direct and detailed way than the student was accustomed to receiving. I also seemed to schedule my time more succinctly allowing about 30 to 45 minutes in biweekly sessions with doctoral students unless there were compelling reasons to meet for longer or to meet less often. From my view, it kept students on track to meet regularly. After two or three decide which meetings to discuss the study design and finalize the proposal, the student appeared at my door around lunch time and wanted to meet with me, unannounced. I had planned to join two colleagues for a work session over lunch, which I am sure appeared to the student like a social rather than a professional meeting. When I suggested that the student return later in the afternoon at a time when my schedule was open, she began to cry. I told my colleagues to proceed without me and returned to the office to meet with the student. Hence, I learned about her feelings of loss about the previous chair and that they would often meet for a couple of hours weekly to discuss the dissertation. Even though we had made more significant progress on the task, the relationship had been neglected in her view.

I share this story as an illustration of the sensitive nature of the relationship between chair and student. That relationship has been characterized in many ways:

Unlike many experts, I advise doctoral candidates to make their selection based on matching personal styles rather than trying to find the greatest expert in the field. The advisor-advisee relationship can become as intense as any family relationship. Some advising relationships are more like parent-child relationships; whereas, others are more like a marriage, more cooperative, and are more mutually satisfying. Divorce, of course, is always possible, but costly, both emotionally, and in terms of time and money. So I

advise a period of courtship before you make any final commitment about your advisor. (Jenson, 2007, p. 1)

Even when the committee and the chair are well meaning, tensions and perceptions can cloud the relationship. For the purposes here, I will assume that the committee and the chair are advocates for the student's success and that it is ultimately in the best interest of the committee and the university to graduate doctoral students. Truly, it is in the best interest of the faculty to produce successful graduates.

Committee Coordination Part Two: Orchestrating Feedback

The committee processes for qualitative dissertation writing face similar barriers and pitfalls as do quantitative dissertations, but, because qualitative studies are more emergent, they may be subject to increased shifts in committee member responses over time. Just as the dissertation study itself evolves over time as data are collected and codes or themes are identified, the committee members' relationship to the study, the student and other committee members can evolve. In addition, the previous examples show how shifts in committee membership over time exacerbate the need for shared information and decision making. Unlike studies that begin with hypotheses, the research questions associated with qualitative study design only guide the inquiry, leaving room for interpretation. Committee members who agree about data analysis in one meeting can easily rethink that agreement in the next one, which is several weeks or often months later. For that reason, recording the decisions of the committee is very important. I advise students to record notes (and in some potentially difficult situations I do this myself) and send them to all committee members, much like minutes of a meeting. Some students have asked to record my feedback and/or that of the committee. Even when the committee is collegial, questions can arise far into the dissertation process which cause committee members to rethink earlier positions. In some cases this is acceptable or even desirable, but often the qualitative dissertation is more of a journey with a general itinerary than a project with a specific blueprint. Staying true to the decisions made along the way can contribute to the trustworthiness of the analysis and findings. I have found myself as chair approaching the committee much like I would in gathering interview data: listening,

recording, restating and ultimately member checking their responses. In this sense, the student creates waypoints that capture and reduce the data at various times during the journey. The committee begins to create a shared linguistic community (Young, 1990) that can help to overcome the obtuseness of the language of qualitative methods and to make "crisp" the shared understandings of the committee members

In addition to posing challenges for committee meetings, the qualitative dissertation may require extra attention to securing responses from committee members (Fauske, 2000). Ideally, all of the members will have expertise in qualitative methods, but often in my experience this is not the case. All faculty have expertise in and preferences for a particular kind of research method and cannot reasonably be expected to have in-depth expertise in all genres of qualitative method. This unevenness in expertise coupled with the nebulousness of the language of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Eisner & Peshkin, 1990; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Ely, 1991), can create situations where students fair better with individual discussions or face to face meetings with each committee member prior to launching a meeting for a proposal or final defense. Students can synthesize the discussion with each faculty member. This can be particularly effective when the student needs affirmation of an incremental, or emergent, decision in the midst of the study when no formal meetings are typically scheduled. However, I also have called committee meetings when a decision can have major impact on how the study progresses. Some situations can call for additional committee feedback or a meeting of the entire committee. Occasionally, a question arises that merits the collection attention and expertise of the entire committee.

One student, who was studying professional community in an elementary school and had gained entry under the existing principal, was asked not to return by the replacement principal when the original principal became ill and took leave of absence. The new principal was coincidentally the student's current husband's former wife. The student, with the careful guidance and intervention of the committee, was able to conduct the remaining interviews in an off-campus location and supplement with some focus group data.

The committee assisted the student in rethinking the study to overcome this barrier. If the question is methodologically complicated, a meeting of the committee's "minds," as opposed to a unilateral decision by the chair, may avert subsequent discord. Another situation that can benefit from additional committee feedback occurs when a student, usually in the phase of full immersion in the data, begins to doubt the process and/or the chair's counsel. Reinforcement can be helpful to the student in getting "unstuck."

I joined a dissertation committee as the methods advisor for an EdD student who had been required by his committee to conduct his dissertation study on the superintendent in another school district besides the one in which he worked. This required the student to take off many days of work in order to conduct interviews and to sit in on meetings in addition to reviewing documents. In one committee meeting about 8 months into data collection, the student expressed frustration, exasperation really, with the inordinate amount of time that he had been required to commit to this project when other students in his cohort were defending in a few weeks. The superintendent in the district under study was difficult to schedule and, because the study was politically sensitive, the internal administrative staff were reluctant to trust the student as researcher. The student had requested a meeting to ask permission to study his own district, in spite of the amount of time that he had already spent in the present study. The chair had agreed to call the meeting in an effort to restate and reinforce the original decision of studying another district. Near the end of the meeting, the student was asked to leave and allow the committee to make a decision. Committee members could see that the student would have difficulty completing the study as framed, and, in fact, appeared to be on the verge of giving up the dissertation. After much discussion, the committee was able to convince the chair that rigor could be maintained in a careful crafted "insider" study. The committee helped the student to reframe the study as an insider, participant observer study honoring the tenets of rigor indicated for that kind of researcher role.

The story of this floundering student illustrates, through lived experience, the incredible influence that the chair and committee have over the process, and how a simple decision to increase the number of interviews or the venue for the study can have exponential impact on students' time and

resources. I can cite numerous examples where committee members eschewed the idea of a single case design or wanted 20 interview respondents instead of 12. The impact on students can be devastating. Often these directions emerge from a lack of understanding or a lack of trust in qualitative methods. In this respect, the choice of committee members as well as the selection of a chair who can articulate clearly what constitutes rigor is invaluable to moving students through the qualitative dissertation study. I have been guilty of such decisions as well.

I recall the student who had completed a fairly comprehensive study of school leader perceptions of safety issues and was rushing to defend. He truly had not lived with the data as long as needed to complete a thorough analysis. As a committee member, I requested that as least one data display be produced to capture and highlight the major themes in the findings, and that reduced the data to a stage where the findings could be readily shared in professional setting. The student agreed to complete that display as one of the final revisions. However, because I did not specify the length, that student prepared a complex display over eight pages long that was simply a reiteration of the narrative divided into the boxes of a table. What I intended to be a one page, a one-afternoon only summary had become a 2-week endeavor that never accomplished the purpose. Neither of us was satisfied with the outcome.

These examples show the dilemmas of committee coordination around the qualitative dissertation. The language that we individually use to describe certain processes can be easily misunderstood by the students and other committee members as well. Building a shared linguistic community (Young, 1990) is important both during the committee function and beyond in association among faculty outside the dissertation committee structure. This process can be impeded when committee members have to be replaced; the longer the dissertation takes, the more likely replacements will occur. In addition, hazy notions of rigor and processes can spill over from quantitative practices to cloud and confound our decisions around qualitative research. I have heard many times that the single case N is too small or why bother to do the study if it cannot be generalized. Even when these sentiments are not so directly expressed, they can creep into the

discussions, and only through the continued diligence of the chair and committee members can this be prevented.

The Illusive "Black Hole" of Qualitative Data Analysis

One of the most confounding elements of a qualitative dissertation is what I call the "black hole" of data analysis. The many methods chapters that I have read over the years typically address the design of the study, the conceptual framework data collection methods, and sampling techniques. They address less well the "nitty gritty" of what actually happens during data analysis and data reduction. The methods section usually ends with some language about "codes and themes will be emergent in a constant comparative analysis," or conversely, "the elements of the conceptual framework will be used to code the data through modified induction." The chapter ends, and the findings chapter begins, leaving the reader, and sometimes committee members, wondering exactly what happened to the data. There is little included, in such instances, about how the data were literally handled by the researchers. I encourage students when writing the methods section of the dissertation to remain "transparent" and even to become literal in their description of the analysis. Students describe in some cases the physical processes of what they did to categorize each unit of data, how all the data were accounted for, and whether there were non-examples or data that did not fit into the codes or themes. Qualitative researchers often talk about the data "telling a story." Telling the story of data analysis is equally important. I advise students to display their codes and themes succinctly in a table or as an appendix, whichever more clearly explicates the analysis processes for the reader (Fauske, 2000).

Similarly, the richness or thickness of the data requires that the researcher reduce the data to a clearly organized and understandable interpretation (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The transition from dissertation writing to writing for publication often hinges around one's ability to reduce the data, to synthesize and make "crisp" the findings. It is a hazy transition that some students never make (Fauske, 2001). One or more data displays during the emergence of the study can lend clarity and precision to the data analysis process. Articulating the steps of developing grounded theory, for example, can both clarify the analysis and

interpretation for the reader and also can help the student move to the final stages of identifying implications, of highlighting the what I call the "so what factor." What do the data tell us that offer new knowledge and/or extend current theory? I have seen many students struggle in their dissertation defense because they are still overly immersed in the data and have not yet stepped back from the study sufficiently to "tell the story."

Trusting the Process

I have an emerging theory that, especially in a qualitative dissertation, there are peaks and valleys. On the peaks in the sun, the view is clear and we collectively know where we are headed. In the valleys, our vision is impeded and clouds and shadows can hide the signs that guide our progress. Sometimes, the only choice is to sit and wait for the sun. Other times, careful scrutiny of the few visible signs can allow us to set off in the right direction. Some dissertations have numerous peaks and valleys, and our stamina and perseverance is tested. When my students and I find ourselves in a valley, it becomes difficult to stay immersed, to "trust" the process.

Yet, trusting the process of qualitative inquiry is indeed the crux of completing the study. Trusting the process is defined as "being willing to postpone judgment, to remain authentically immersed, and to accept the unpredictability of the outcomes of applying qualitative methods" (Meloy, 2002, p. 46). Largely, it involves the willingness to live with the inherent ambiguity that is qualitative data, to live in the and space (Atkinson, 2001). Atkinson offers a reconceptualization of decisions and choices that acknowledges blurred boundaries and ambiguous spaces not as either/or but as and (p. 311).

As researchers, we aim to categorize and code our data. Atkinson's notion applied here would allow us not to make such choices until they become clear. For example, interview data on school improvement practices can be positive and negative, good for some children and bad for others, effective for some teachers and ineffective for others. Of course, the ambiguity fades over time and choices become clearer, but ambiguity is common in the study of humankind and of educational leadership. Thus, to some extent, the qualitative dissertation is never completely "done." Rather, the evolution of the research and the researcher continues, and the reporting of

finding become waypoints in the journey (Meloy, 2002). Students who want to be "done" struggle with the discursive nature of qualitative "knowing" and the iterative nature of data analysis (Piantinada & Garman, 1999).

Getting to the "so what" stage of the dissertation requires full immersion in and living with the data (Van Maanen, 1988, 1995). And living with the data requires time, a commodity that is often perceived as scarce by students. Time above all other factors seems to be a deterrent to choosing to write a qualitative dissertation for some. Understanding the role of time in the dissertation process can relieve fears and can make the choice of qualitative method, assuming that is it the best choice, a viable alternative for the "time fearful" student. In my experience, when a student resists living with the data long enough to become immersed, it may indicate a lack of saturation and repetition in the data, failure to adequately reduce the data to a level where the audience can make sense of the findings readily, and/or failure to grasp the notion that the data represent a picture in time. Living with the data can be misinterpreted as being in the field (Piantinada & Garman, 1999), but sometimes living with the data means exiting the field for a time or stepping back from the data long enough to recognize saturation. Living with the data also implies an "action" to many students, but sometimes it means the opposite—inaction (Piantinada & Garman, 1999). It is this haziness that produces frustration and consternation in students (and faculty alike) and clouds the decision of when there should be an end to living with the data Even the most capable students grow prematurely weary of living with the data and easily can 'go beyond' the data when pressed to answer the "so what" question.

Conclusion: The "So What"

I attempt to allay the fears about when to end the dissertation study by describing the scholarly process as "joining the conversation" rather than "having the last word." Most students can conceptualize a conversation where different speakers have alternative views and differing information, each enriching the conversation. As time passes and the conversers continue to learn and grow, the conversation becomes further enlightened and enriched. Indeed, the process of joining the conversation is what produces longitudinal exploration of research questions, one study building from

others, and scholars using different methods and data sources that result in creation of theory and new knowledge in the field. My participation here is intended as a continued conversation about the persistence of traditional notions of scientific investigation that intentionally or unintentionally influences scholars in a particular direction. By making these observations and concerns explicit, and by offering implications and suggestions that can buffer contextual complexity, scholars can collectively consider their own views and veracity regarding the choices that novice scholars will make, embracing marginalized voices and alternative methodology as "authorized' and valued in academe.

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Author Biography

Janice Fauske, PhD, is a Professor in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of South Florida Sarasota campus. Before joining the USF faculty, Dr. Fauske worked as the Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs at the Utah State Board of Regents, as a faculty member and administrator at Weber State University, as founding Dean of the School of Education at Westminster College, and Associate Professor and Doctoral Advisor in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Utah. Janice's teaching expertise includes teaching and learning for school leaders, leadership, organizational change, and qualitative research methods. Her research interests include organizational learning and change, effects of collaborative governance on teaching and learning in schools, and teaching in educational administration programs.

Doctoral Program Issues: Commentary on Companion Dissertations

Meta-analytic Model

The meta-analytic model is based in a common research question. The meta-analytic model represents the analysis of a specific topic from multiple perspectives or vantage points for the purpose of comparing and contrasting findings. For example, a question may be, "What are the perceptions of superintendents and their school board presidents regarding the role of superintendents in 1000 Texas public school districts?" If a team of three individuals are working on this particular question, then the first dissertation may explore the question from a small district perspective; the second dissertation may explore the question from a mid-size district perspective, while the third dissertation may explore the question from the large urban district perspective. In this case, Chapters One (Introduction) and Two (Review of Literature) of the dissertation could be entirely different; however, the dissertations may all include a collaboratively-derived theoretical framework. Chapter Three (Methodology) must present the sampling plan in differing ways; however, all three dissertations might include the same information on instrumentation, research design, and procedures (all planned together). Chapter Four (Results) and Five (Discussion) would be individually authored and would present the findings for the unique samples and the summary, conclusions, and recommendations. It is recommended in this model that the chair or co-chairs be the same person(s) for the companion dissertations because that

person(s) would have the knowledge of all the multiple dissertations to guide different perspectives.

May (1991), McConaghy (1991), and Nolt (1991) are examples of three companion dissertations that represent such a meta-analytic model. McConaghy's abstract follows and demonstrates the meta-analytic quality of the approach related to learning and teaching in the elementary school. His study reflects the portion of the study that is related to teachers.

Statement of the problem. The study was designed to explore the following problem: Does the IALS approach, utilizing hands-on science based activities integrated with mathematics and language arts and emphasizing a cooperative learning-teaching strategy, enhance learning of science, mathematics, and writing skills among diverse groups of fourth grade students; and does this approach evoke interest by these students and their teachers?

Procedure. The study was conducted by a three-member research team. The team developed the IALS around the theme of magnetism, developed and organized the support materials, trained the teachers, collected and analyzed the student and teacher data, and reported the findings in three companion dissertations. Part 1 analyzed data related to student performance, Part 2 analyzed data pertaining to student responses, and Part 3 analyzed data related to teacher responses.

The population included 348 students from 16 fourth grade classes from three school districts. The design of the study included an experimental group receiving the IALS treatment (n = 248), a traditional group, receiving a textbook treatment (n = 67), and a comparison group receiving no specific treatment (n = 23).

The IALS consisted of six lessons taught in an 8 week period. A Student Activity Book containing the activities of the IALS was included to serve as a means of collecting student responses to those activities. Also included was a Teacher's Guide including related objectives, goals, materials, preparation, investigative procedures, and content. All materials were provided in a classroom kit.

Teachers were interviewed to determine their preparation for utilizing the IALS, involvement of students in the IALS approach, meeting of stated learning goals, and satisfaction with the cooperative learning-teaching strategy.

Major conclusions. Teachers were able to effectively utilize the IALS approach, but recommended additional time be provided for teaching the individual lessons. Teachers were able to involve students and meet the established learning goals. Cooperative learning-teaching was not clearly viewed as favorable or unfavorable. Additionally, the overall study determined that an IALS could be developed and effectively implemented by elementary teachers among diverse groups of fourth grade students. ftn*This study was conducted in a three-part effort by team members Patricia Nell May (pub.# 9134976), Robert M. McConaghy (pub.# 9134977), and Sally K. Nolt (pub.# 9134985). (¶1-6)

The abstract of one of the companions is also shared as follows so that the relationships of two of the three companions can be made by the reader. The other companion dissertation in this trio is related in similar fashion. May's (1991) study reflects the student research component to the problem and her abstract follows.

Statement of the problem. The study was designed to explore the following problem: Does the IALS approach, utilizing hands-on science based activities integrated with mathematics and language arts and emphasizing a cooperative learning-teaching strategy, enhance learning of science, mathematics, and writing skills among diverse groups of fourth grade students; and does this approach evoke interest by these students and their teachers?

Procedure. The study was conducted by a three-member research team. The team developed the IALS around the theme of magnetism, developed and organized the support materials, trained the teachers, collected and analyzed the student and teacher data, and reported the findings in three companion dissertations. Part 1 analyzed data related to student performance, Part 2 analyzed data pertaining to student responses, and Part 3 analyzed data related to teacher responses.

The population included 348 students from 16 fourth grade classes from three school districts. The design of the study included an experimental group receiving the IALS treatment (n = 248), a traditional group, receiving a textbook treatment (n = 67), and a comparison group receiving no specific treatment (n = 23). Student performance was examined through pretest to posttest mean differences of students in the experimental, traditional, and comparison groups.

The IALS consisted of six lessons taught in a 8 week period. A Student Activity Book containing the activities of the IALS was included to serve as a means of collecting student responses to those activities. Also included was a Teacher's Guide including related objectives, goals, materials, preparation, investigative procedures, and content. All materials were provided in a classroom kit.

Major conclusions. Students using the IALS approach experienced the greatest success in strengthening mathematics skills. Students using both the IALS and textbook approaches learned the intended science knowledge and writing skills.

The IALS approach resulted in significant academic gains for all genders, ethnic groups, academic standings, instructional programs, and learning preferences with the following exceptions: gains in science knowledge were comparatively lower for ESL students, as were gains in mathematics skills for the gifted. Additionally, the overall study determined that an IALS could be developed and effectively implemented by elementary teachers among diverse groups of fourth grade students. ftn*This study was conducted in a three-part effort by team members Patricia Nell May (pub.# 9134976), Robert M. McConaghy (pub.# 9134977), and Sally K. Nolt (pub.# 9134985). (¶1-6)

The two abstracts presented are the same with the exception of the conclusions section. Additionally, the abstracts of all three dissertations note in a footnote that the study is a part of a three-part companion dissertation. This should clearly be noted in the abstract, particularly as words are used that are the same, and to readers reading without this notation, it may appear as plagiarism. The note would stand to clarify that point. Recommendations for the misconception of plagiarism not to occur

would be to alter each of the abstracts to be relevant to only that particular aspect of the meta-analytic study. Perhaps the method and purpose may remain the same in general, but the specific aspect of the individual dissertation reported should be more prominent. Specify the larger sample, but hone in on the individual study's sample. The conclusions section is the only area in the abstract that make these three abstracts different to the public's review. More specificity to the individual studies is recommended in this type of meta-analytic companion dissertation as students collaborate and write their dissertations.

Multiple Case Study Model

A second format for the companion dissertation is the multiple case study model that may elaborate one or more research questions. The multiple case model for companion dissertations is characterized by a collaboratively developed research question that envelopes two, three, or more cases extending from that one question. For example, one research question for three companion dissertations could be, "What content and instructional strategies should be included in a basic statistics course created for both practicing and prospective school principals?" In this design, the three candidates would be expected to complete a one-year research seminar dedicated to the following essential tasks: (a) creating a common theoretical framework (review of relevant literature), (b) constructing a dissertation proposal that specified both common and individual research tasks for each candidate, and (c) designing a common framework for organizing the narrative to be presented in each companion dissertation. This format differs from the traditional five chapter dissertation in which a separate review of literature chapter is presented as the traditional chapter two. In this model, the candidates' proposals would have four parts:

1. A collaborative elaboration of a theoretical framework developed in a research seminar during coursework.
2. A second section of the proposal including the common purpose and research questions to be addressed in each dissertation.
3. A third section of the proposal including the common research design used to guide the unique and collaborative empirical efforts to be undertaken in each companion dissertation.

4. A final section of the proposal describing how the narrative for each dissertation would be organized into five parts (chapters).

In this multiple case study model, all three dissertation proposals may be presented at on single proposal session. In this case, the same chair(s) and two committee members are recommended to be the same with a fourth committee member being different on each committee.

As an example, Jones (1999), Etheredge (1999), and Polnick (1999) developed three companion dissertations that followed an agreed-upon structure for a five-chapter dissertation: (a) Introduction presented the theoretical framework and literature review, intent of inquiry (problem, purpose, and research questions; basically the same chapter for all three dissertations), design of inquiry (process and expected outcome for each phase; basically the same chapter for all three), and a review of how the dissertation narrative was to be organized, (b) Phase One elaborated the intent, actual implementation method, and research findings for the first phase in which each candidate logged entries into a personal daily journal, took statements from school principal colleagues, and investigated appropriate situations encountered in the school principal literature dealing with data-based decision making (dissertation chapter diverges among the three), (c) Phase Two elaborated the intent, actual implementation method, and research findings for the second phase in which the candidate served as a statistics and design consultant to a practicing principal during a data-based action research project (dissertation chapter diverges for each candidate), (d) Phase Three elaborated the intent, actual implementation method, and research findings for the third phase in which each candidate developed an inventory of recommendations (dissertation is different for each), and (e) Summary and Conclusions provided a brief overview of the detailed information presented in the first four chapters (dissertation is similar yet divergent for each).

The abstracts of the multiple case study companion dissertations follow and are presented as the same abstract, though the dissertations differ by chapter as previously described. Polnick's abstract (same as Etheredge and Jones) follows.

The purpose of this inquiry was to test the feasibility of the McNamara and Thompson (1996) model for teaching statistics and data analysis methods in principal preparation programs.

Design. This inquiry was conducted in three phases. The first phase was used to create an inventory of situations that describe opportunities for principals to use statistics and data analysis methods at the campus level. The second phase was a case study that required the author to assume a consultant role in conducting and reporting the results of a formative evaluation survey indicating the effectiveness of an ongoing staff development project aimed at improving test scores on a single middle school campus. The third phase was dedicated to constructing recommendations.

Findings. The first phase identified 482 specific opportunities for data analysis. Most opportunities focused on instructional concerns and over 90 percent of these opportunities involved using descriptive rather than inferential statistics to analyze data already available on the campus. Completion of the formative evaluation case study in the second phase provided several additional insights about the data analysis skills principals need to be effective on the job.

Recommendations. Phase three provides twelve recommendations organized into three sections. The first section provides two recommendations to confirm and endorse the guidelines advanced in the McNamara and Thompson (1996) model. Using the confirmatory evidence from the first two phases, the second section offers seven specific recommendations for the design of a statistics course aimed at developing data analysis skills for prospective and practicing school principals. The third section presents three recommendations for continuing the research agenda initiated in this inquiry.

Evaluation Model

A third type of companion dissertation is considered the evaluation model. In such a model, the same question is asked for varying samples. An example of this model is exhibited by two candidates who desired to evaluate whether a highly focused Spanish early literacy intervention

increased pre-reading skills for culturally and linguistically diverse students who were identified by their classroom teachers as most at risk for reading difficulties. In these example companion dissertations, the evaluation agenda was the same, but the samples were different. One study was at the kindergarten level, and one was at the first grade level. Archival data were used. A common research design was used for both dissertations including the same statewide instrument and descriptive statistics. Chapters differed in both dissertations with the exception of the common evaluative agenda, purpose, and research questions. McArthur (2003) and Mohr (2003) authored their abstracts as follows.

McArthur (2003) reported her abstract in her dissertation in the following manner.

Purpose. The purpose of this exploratory study was to evaluate whether a highly focused Spanish early literacy intervention increased pre-reading skills for sixteen culturally and linguistically diverse bilingual kindergarten students who were identified as most at risk for reading difficulties at the focus school. Two research questions were used to guide the empirical efforts of the study: (a) How effective was the intervention for improving student reading scores in each of the 12 instructional reading components addressed in the intervention? and (b) How effective was the intervention for each of the sixteen kindergarten bilingual students in the focus school's at risk population?

Design. A one-group pretest-posttest design was used to provide the empirical evidence needed to answer both research questions. The independent variable was the set of twelve unique reading intervention strategies that were developed for each of the twelve components measured by the Tejas LEE (TL), the common measure used in the pretest and posttest.

Results. For research question one, the Spanish early literacy intervention was determined to be effective for seven of the twelve TL literacy components addressed in the intervention.

For research question two, this Spanish early literacy intervention was determined to be "Highly Effective" or "Effective" for eight kindergarten

students, "Partially Effective" for an additional five students and "Ineffective" for the remaining three kindergarten students.

Recommendations. Three recommendations were presented for continuing the research agenda addressed in this study. The initial recommendation suggested a need for researchers to reexamine the validity of the First Letter Omission measure used in the kindergarten TL. The other two recommendations indicate how and why practitioners should replicate this study for other at risk bilingual kindergarten students. (p.iii-iv)

Mohr's dissertation abstract is clearly similar to McArthur's as it should be in a companion dissertation; however, differences are also clear in the abstract. Mohr's abstract follows.

Purpose. The intent of this inquiry was to determine the extent to which a highly focused Spanish early literacy intervention increased pre-reading skills for 13 culturally and linguistically diverse bilingual first grade students who were identified in their school as most at risk for reading difficulties. Two research questions were used to structure the empirical efforts of this inquiry:(a) How effective was the intervention for improving student reading scores in each of the 17 instructional reading components addressed in the intervention? and (b) How effective was the intervention for each of the 13 first grade bilingual students designated as the at risk population?

Design. A single-group pretest-posttest design was used to generate the empirical evidence needed to answer these two research questions. The independent variable was the set of 17 unique reading intervention strategies that were developed for each of the 17 components measured in the first grade version of the Tejas LEE (TL), the common measure used in the pretest and the posttest.

Question one findings. Using specified decision rules for interpreting the pretest and posttest TL results, the Spanish early literacy intervention was determined to be effective for 15 of the 17 TL literacy components addressed in the intervention.

Question two findings. This Spanish early literacy intervention was determined to be "Highly Effective" or "Effective" for ten first grade students and "Partially Effective" for the remaining three first grade students.

Recommendations. Three recommendations were advanced for continuing the research agenda initiated in this inquiry. The first two recommendations focused on future research aimed at improving the TL. The first research recommendation called for developing a parallel form of the TL to eliminate the problem of test wiseness. The second research recommendation suggested a need to reexamine the validity of the Fluency and Reading Accuracy TL measures. The final recommendation proposes what practitioners should do to replicate this study for the same intervention population. (p. iii-iv)

As indicated in the abstract of McArthur, the purpose was "to evaluate whether a highly focused Spanish early literacy intervention increased pre-reading skills for sixteen culturally and linguistically diverse bilingual kindergarten students who were identified as most at risk for reading difficulties at the focus school (p. iii)." Mohr addressed the similar purpose in this way for these companion dissertations, "to determine the extent to which a highly focused Spanish early literacy intervention increased pre-reading skills for 13 culturally and linguistically diverse bilingual first grade students who were identified in their school as most at risk for reading difficulties (p.iii)." The evaluation model for companion dissertations focuses on the same topic/issue/concern being evaluated as evidence in the referenced cases of McArthur and Mohr on the evaluation of an intervention in early Spanish literacy.

Single Case Model

A fourth type of companion dissertation is a single case model in which one context or setting is selected for the study; however, differing target populations are studied within that context. For example, one companion dissertation (Creel, 2000) sought to determine differences in student achievement and attendance of African American students before and after the implementation of a standardized dress code in a suburban high school in Southeast Texas, while the other companion studied the same among

Hispanic high school students (Widener, 2000). As part of the companion studies, differences in student attendance between African American students and Hispanic students were studied to determine if differences existed in two separate subpopulations in the same high school.

The organization of such a study follows: Chapter One (structured in the same way, but with differing information with the exception of the purpose which is stated the same but with different populations or samples), Chapter Two will be different because two differing groups are to be studied; therefore, the review of literature will be different, Chapter Three will have the same content with, of course, different samples or populations, Chapter Four and Five will be individually authored, and Chapter Six should be a companion cross-case analysis analyzed and written by the two candidates, so in this sense, Chapter Six will be the same in both dissertations.

Creel's dissertation abstract follows.

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to determine differences in student achievement and attendance of African American students before and after the implementation of a standardized dress code in a suburban high school in Southeast Texas. As part of a companion study, differences in student attendance between African American students and Hispanic students were studied to determine if differences existed in two separate subpopulations in the same high school.

Method. This study used a correlational research design in that it explored relationships between different categories of variables, namely achievement scores from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills and attendance records from before and after the implementation of a standardized dress code.

Findings. (1) There is no significant statistical data identified in this study to support a conclusion that there is a relationship between the implementation of a standardized dress code and improved TAAS scores among African American students. (2) A significant relationship between the implementation of a standardized dress code and improved attendance among African American students was noted. (3) The empirical data of this study provide no justification for the implementation of a dress code for the

explicit purpose of improved student achievement among African American students. There may be other appropriate reasons to consider the implementation of a standardized dress code as noted in the extensive review of literature. (4) The improvement in attendance among African American students following the implementation of a standardized dress code could be related to an improved self concept among these students who were investigated, enhanced campus morale, improved safety and feelings of security, enhanced concept of team and family among students, and reduced sources of distraction. Each of these concepts has been linked with dress codes in the literature. (p. iv-v)

Widener's abstract is shown as follows and demonstrates the type of similarities and differences noted related to single case model.

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to determine differences in student achievement and attendance of Hispanic students before and after the implementation of a standardized dress code in a suburban high school in Southeast Texas. As part of a companion study, differences in student attendance between Hispanic students and African-American students before and after the implementation of a standardized dress code in a suburban high school in Southeast Texas were studied to determine if differences existed in two separate subpopulations in the same high school.

Method. This study utilized a correlational research design and explored relationships between different categories of variables, namely achievement scores from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills and attendance records from before and after the implementation of a standardized dress code.

Findings. (1) There is significant statistical data to support a conclusion a relationship between the implementation of a standardized dress code and improved TAAS scores among Hispanic students. It is important to note that this significance does not imply causation, only a relationship. (2) There is no statistical evidence to suggest a significant relationship between the implementation of a standardized dress code and improved attendance among Hispanic students. (3) While the empirical data of this study provides no justification for the implementation of a standardized dress code for the explicit purpose of improved student achievement among

Hispanic students, there may be other reasons to consider the implementation of a standardized dress code. This study suggests that the implementation of a standardized dress code may contribute to the improvement of achievement and attendance among the Hispanic subpopulation of a suburban high school. Based on the data, it appears that the implementation of a standardized dress code does impact the Hispanic population at a significant level, but is not considered causation in terms of this study. (p.iv-v)

The abstracts for the companion dissertations for Creel and Widener are similar and indicate a single case design in one location, but studying two different populations from that location or single case site. The companion dissertations represented here are different in terms of outcome and populations.

Subsequent Replication Model

A fifth format for the companion dissertation is the subsequent replication model in which same topic is addressed for the same target population. This model distinguishes itself from the other four models aforementioned in this way-- rather than being conducted concurrently as in the other models, the dissertations in this model are usually carried out chronilogically. There is a scarcity of such a model, but we anticipate an emerging number particularly derived from longitudinal research projects. The following proposals are heuristic examples simply for illustrative purposes.

Statement of Problem. Norm-referenced measures (NRMs) or standardized measures are widely used to assess students' learning. The advantage of utilizing NRM rests on the comparability across student population, school, school district, and states. However, researchers have consistently expressed their concerns of NRMs because they not inform instruction; whereas, a curriculum-based measure (CBM) will provide teachers an added dimension in evaluating a student which is more relevant and beneficial.

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to develop and validate a curriculum-based measure on English oral proficiency and expressive vocabulary knowledge of 451 Hispanic kindergarteners participating in an on-going story-retelling intervention in an urban school district, Southeast

Texas. Science concepts are incorporated in this intervention, with the objective to enhance second language learners' English vocabulary acquisition. Two research questions guided this study: (a) What is the concurrent validity of CBM with norm-referenced standardized measures on expressive oral English vocabulary knowledge? and (b) What is the concurrent validity of CBM with norm-referenced standardized measures on science concepts?

Design. A correlational design is employed to explore the relationship between scores collected from CBM and Idea Proficiency Test (IPT), Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (WLPB-R), and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).

Findings. A significant relationship was identified between CBM and IPT, WLPB-R, and ITBS, respectively, with moderate effect sizes. This indicated that the instrument has reasonable evidence of concurrent validity with norm-referenced tests in kindergarten classrooms and teachers are suggested to use this in their classroom with the outlined story-retelling intervention.

Recommendations. Findings of this study apply restrictively to kindergarten students receiving the same intervention. It is recommended that as students progress to a higher grade level, the CBM needs to be modified so as to reflect an alignment with the curriculum for that specific grade level.

Since this example is centered in an on-going project, the intervention continues at the next grade level with more vocabulary words and more intensive science concepts. The subsequent replication model of companion dissertation calls for a replication of the previous study using the adopted measure (aligned with curriculum) with the students who matriculate to 1st or higher grade. The same group of participants can be involved; however, due to the reality of attrition rates (withdrawal) prevailing in certain school districts, new students are likely to be added, which might result into a slightly different sample size. Unique to this model, as opposed to simple replication studies is the nature of the term, "companion." Prior to initiating this study, the two researchers would collaborate on how the study will be conducted and in what way it will be replicated. For example, a subsequent replication model companion dissertation abstract might be:

Statement of Problem. Norm-referenced measures (NRMs) or standardized measures are widely used to assess students' learning. The advantage of utilizing NRM rests on the comparability across student population, school, school district, and states. However, researchers have consistently expressed their concerns of NRMs because they not inform instruction; whereas, a curriculum-based measure (CBM) will provide teachers an added dimension in evaluating a student which is more relevant and beneficial.

Purpose. A companion dissertation was completed previously on kindergarten students, and therefore, the purpose of my study was to modify and validate the CBM on English oral proficiency and emergent literacy skills of 346 Hispanic first graders participating in an on-going story-retelling intervention in an urban school district, Southeast Texas. Three research questions guided this study: (a) What is the concurrent validity of CBM with norm-referenced standardized measure on English oracy?; (b) What is the concurrent validity of CBM with norm-referenced standardized measures on science concepts?; and (c) What is the concurrent validity of CBM with norm-referenced standardized measure on emergent literacy skills?

Design. A correlational design is employed to explore the relationship between scores collected from CBM and Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (WLPB-R), Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).

Findings. Just as in the previous companion dissertation with kindergarten students, significant relationships were identified between CBM and WLPB-R, ITBS, TPRI, and DIEBLS, respectively, with moderate effect sizes. This indicated that the instrument has strong evidence of concurrent validity with NRMs in first grade classrooms and teachers are suggested to use this in their classroom with the outlined intervention.

Recommendations. Findings of my study apply restrictively to first graders receiving the same intervention. It is recommended that as students progress to a higher grade level, especially the 3rd grade, concurrent validity of CBM needs to be investigated with Texas Assessment of Knowledge and

Skills (TAKS, a high-stake test which determines grade promotion/retention in Texas).

In the subsequent replication model it is critical for individual researchers to make appropriate time-related (e.g. grade level, age, maturity, etc.) modifications in their theoretical framework, participants, and measure(s). Additionally, the researcher who works on the second study should make the relationship to the first researcher's study. The first researcher should note in the ending of the dissertation that a subsequent research study is planned and is planned as a subsequent replication companion dissertation.

Recommended Elements of Companion Dissertations

We have presented a variety of types of companion dissertations with examples. At this point we propose that a companion dissertation program should have six common elements that undergird any type of companion dissertation employed. A brief discussion of the six elements follows.

Common Research Agenda

A common research agenda for companion dissertations is pivotal for such an engagement. This common agenda, developed through a team approach, is usually expressed as a basic research question or purpose statement. Humphrey, Coté, Walton, Meininger, and Laine (2005) wrote about the field of biomedical sciences and engineering in terms of relations and teamwork. They stated

We cannot continue to train graduate students in isolation within single disciplines, nor can we ask any one individual to learn all the essentials of biology, engineering, and mathematics. We must transform how students are trained and incorporate how real-world research and development are done–in diverse, interdisciplinary teams. Our fundamental vision is to create an innovative paradigm for graduate research and training that yields a new generation of biomedical engineers, life scientists, and mathematicians that is more diverse and that embraces and actively pursues a truly interdisciplinary, team-based approach to research based on a known benefit and mutual respect. (p. 98)

In order to achieve that end, Humphrey et al. suggested, among other interventions, a collaborative dissertation.

Even the National Institute of Health (NIH) (2004) encourages students to develop collaborative dissertations between two or more mentors. The advantage to this approach from NIH is similar to that of Humphrey et al., with NIH stating "you would get a much broader introduction to approaches to science, two sets of scientific colleagues, and learn advanced professional skills for working among scientific colleagues" (¶ 3).

Even though a dissertation is a companion piece of research, it is important to note the contribution of each individual. On this, Teachers College, Columbia University, advises its students, "When a dissertation is a cooperative enterprise, it must be planned so that the individual contribution of each candidate can be identified and evaluated" (¶ 2).

Common Intent of the Inquiry Statement

The common inquiry statement or research agenda is usually written in each companion dissertation in terms of a unique target population or interest. Although the dissertations themselves may not be postmodern in nature, the companion dissertation process, itself, is aligned to a postmodern approach. Because the companion dissertation requires a commonly developed inquiry statement or agenda of research, this approach opposes positivist, modernist views of research in which the knower and the knowledge are independent of each other. Rather as a postmodern viewpoint, promoted by Derrida (1978), Foucault (1972, 1980), Lyotard (1984), Ricoeur (1983), and Rorty (1979), companion dissertations in the development of a common statement of inquiry, the knower(s) and knowledge are interdependent with knowledge being relational.

Common Design of the Inquiry Statement

The inquiry statements are written in each dissertation to reflect the particular expected outcomes and corresponding inquiry procedures for completing a designated set of sequential research tasks related to that aspect of the research.

Common Dissertation Narrative Format

As indicated in each of the formatted types of companion dissertations, the collaborators determine how their dissertations will be written in terms of what is to be presented in each chapter of the dissertation. In these social and scientific discourses, the collaborators will need to determine how each chapter will be similar or dissimilar.

Same Chair

We recommend as one of the elements of the companion dissertation to have the same chair(s). Additionally, at least one other committee member who can serve on the companion dissertations for is needed for continuity.

Similar Abstracts Noting Companion

In the abstracts of the dissertation, note that the dissertation is a part of a companion project or is a companion dissertation. This provides the reader an understanding of the nature of the dissertation and clarifies any misunderstanding if reading the two or more dissertations in isolation. Additionally, it provides other researchers with information to review the research from the companions from a holistic viewpoint.

Benefits of Companion Dissertation Programs

Companion dissertations are the name implies—a work of teamwork and collaboration. Some work well under this structure, while others do not. However, in our experiences working within a structure of companion dissertations, we have found there to be several benefits of the companion dissertation program which have assisted graduate students, as well as professors, in several ways.

1. Faculty members have been able to design meaningful "custom-made" research elective courses.
2. Both faculty and students have increased collaborative discussions in dissertation advising.
3. Faculty members have established early on a clear rationale that allows students to connect formal coursework and dissertation research.

4. An opportunity has been created to provide both faculty and graduate students: hands on experience in conducting actual research syntheses and meta-analytic studies that have direct and immediate relevance in their own practicing professional environments.
5. An opportunity has been developed through this process for faculty members to update their research skills.
6. The process has created a community of learners.
7. The process has assisted in developing a culture in which collaboration in publication is valued.
8. Summarily, the use of companion dissertations has reduced the number of All But Dissertation (ABD) students because knowledge becomes an interdependent commodity and support of other students, such as a collaborative cohort, naturally increases completion rates.

Final Comments on Implementation Constraints and Recommendations

Companion dissertation programs are not without constraints. Five of the most critical challenges associated with implementing effective companion dissertation programs follow.

1. Highly effective companion dissertation programs require creating a departmental advocacy and commitment to this type of collaborative activity. Ideally, this advocacy and commitment should be established before the program is implemented.

2. Highly effective companion dissertation programs also require a department faculty to "bring on board" members of the graduate college responsible for final approval of each companion dissertation.

3. Since the concept of companion dissertations is not widely known, it would be informative if the first chapter of each companion dissertation referenced a dissertation appendix that explained this concept. Ideally, the appendix should have two parts. The first part should provide a brief but informative general description of the characteristics encountered in a companion dissertation. The second part should be designed to include a brief specific description of two pieces of information: (a) a brief explanation of the individual and collaborative contributions to be presented in the dissertation and (b) a list of other companion dissertation authors.

4. Finally, we recommend that the title reflect the companion study as in the following: Dissertation A. A study of the implementation of a standardized dress code and student achievement of African American students in a suburban high school: A companion study, and Dissertation B. A study of the implementation of a standardized dress code and student achievement of Hispanic students in a suburban high school: A companion study. Individuals who are reading one study, then know immediately to look for the companion to this study. If the indication is not listed in the title, the indication should be noted in the abstract.

Companion dissertations can provide unique opportunities for faculty and graduate students to collaborate. Such collaboration mirrors and simulates real-world academia in most instances today in which faculty find themselves more and more collaborating in research endeavors on either common research interests or via the use of various individuals' areas of expertise.

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Author Biographies

James F. McNamara, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. He also serves as a domain editor for the NCPEA CONNEXIONS Knowledge Base.

Rafael Lara-Alecio, PhD, is a Professor and the Director of the Bilingual Programs in the Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University. His primary areas of research and expertise include assessment and evaluation, bilingual and ESL methodologies, approaches and techniques, content area instruction, biliteracy, and parental involvement. He is an experienced early childhood, elementary, and secondary school bilingual teacher. For the past 16 years he has been directing the undergraduate, master and doctoral bilingual programs at Texas A&M University.

Beverly J. Irby, EdD, is a professor and chair of the Educational Leadership and Counseling Department at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. She has chaired numerous dissertations and is the co-author of two books related to dissertations and research, The Qualitative Research Manual and Writing Successful Theses and Disserations. She also serves as a domain editor for the NCPEA CONNEXIONS Knowledge Base.

John R. Hoyle, PhD, is Professor of Educational Administration at Texas A&M University and has authored, co-authored or edited over 120 publications, including 9 books. He served as the AASA Professor of the Year and chaired the National Commission on Standards for the Superintendency. In addition, he served as President of NCPEA and in 2004 was selected by his peers across the nation as one of four "Exceptional Living Scholars" in educational administration.

Fuhui Tong, PhD, is assistant professor of bilingual education in the Department of Educational Psychology, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. Dr. Tong has been a primary methodologist for a multi-

million dollar research grant. Dr. Tong produced an award-winning dissertation.

Appendix A

Listing of Sample Companion Dissertations Referenced

Meta-analytic Models

Horace E. Lilley (August 1975). The Role of the Superintendent of Small Schools in Texas as Perceived by Superintendents and School Board Presidents. (Ph.D. in EDAD Dept.) Texas A&M University.

Edwin H. Casburn (December 1975). The Role of the Superintendent of Small Schools in Texas as Perceived by Superintendents and School Board Presidents. (Ph.D. in EDAD Dept.) Texas A&M University.

Monte K. McBride (May 1976). The Role of the Superintendent of Small Schools in Texas as Perceived by Superintendents and School Board Presidents. (Ph.D. in EDAD Dept.). Texas A&M University.

Case Study Models

Mary K. Jones (1999). Developing Statistics and Data Analysis Skills for Principal Preparation Programs: An Exploratory Study. (Ed.D. Record of Study in EDAD Dept.). Texas A&M University.

Sandra L. Etheredge (1999). Developing Statistics and Data Analysis Skills for Principal Preparation Programs: An Exploratory Study. (Ed.D. Record of Study in EDAD Dept.). Texas A&M University.

Barbara E. Polnick (1999). Developing Statistics and Data Analysis Skills for Principal Preparation Programs: An Exploratory Study. (Ed.D. Record of Study in EDAD Dept.). Texas A&M University.

Evaluation Models

Linda H. Mohr (August 2002). Reading Achievement of First Grade Children Enrolled in a Spanish Early Literacy Intervention Developed in a

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Public School Serving Pre-Kindergarten Through Second Grade Student. (Ph.D. degree in the Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction). Texas A&M University. This dissertation won the 2003 AERA Best Dissertation Award in Bilingual Education.

Frances M. McArthur (August 2002). An Assessment of a Kindergarten Spanish Early Literacy Intervention. (Ph.D. degree in the Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction). Texas A&M University.

Single Case Study Models

Jimmy Ray Creel (2000). A Study of the Implementation of a Standardized Dress Code and Student Achievement of African American Students in a Suburban High School: A Companion Study. (Ed.D. degree in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling). Sam Houston State University.

Angela Widener Stallings (2000). A Study of the Implementation of a Standardized Dress Code and Student Achievement of Hispanic Students in a Suburban High School: A Companion Study. (Ed.D. degree in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling). Sam Houston State University.

TEN YEARS AND COUNTING: SALIENT DOCTORAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY PRACTICES IN AN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The criticisms of educational programs are not entirely new. Educational writers of the last three decades have called for changes in educational leadership preparation programs. In 1979, Griffiths stated, "If educational administration is not in a state of intellectual turmoil, it should be" (p.43). Foster (1994) suggested,

While the content of preparation programs is important, it is equally necessary to pay attention to the processes by which administrators are educated. The traditional didactic method, relying on passive learners, seems an inappropriate way to build on the very real experiences that most adult students bring to the classroom. If we are indeed serious about developing transformative intellectuals, then the process of preparing them in traditional EdD and PhD programs should reflect more than a model where ideas and concepts are provided, and then expected to be regurgitated during comprehensive exams. Rather, we need to engage these practitioners in their own education, building upon what they themselves bring to the classroom. It is these experiences that can be re-thought, reformulated, and recast, so that a critical and reflective mindset about them can be developed. (p. 49)

Acknowledging that little attention was provided to the importance of cultural politics or to critiques of institutionalized practices in many traditional educational administration programs, Anderson (1996) called for a new administrative discourse stating, "This new administrative discourse must not only critique current practices, but also provide a vision of what a democratic school culture would look like" (p. 961). Murphy (2001) emphasized that preparation programs have been criticized as drawing too heavily from management, psychology, and sociological theories rather than focusing on important factors in leading school improvement efforts and improving teaching and learning in schools. An over-emphasis on a positivistic concern of seeking the one best way and a reliance on the theory movement continued from 1950 to 1985 (Murphy, 2001). Murphy (2001) suggested, "A good deal of internal soul searching also has anchored calls

for the reform of school administration. These concerns are centered on the knowledge base supporting the profession and the methods and procedures used to educate school leaders" (p. 1). Russo (2005) stressed, "Leadership theory has never entirely escaped the influence of the rational perspective" (p. 104). It is against this backdrop of criticisms raised against EdD programs that the following analysis is provided.

The Leadership Needed in Schools

Courageous and ethical leadership is advocated for today's schools (Reyes & Wagstaff, 2005). Kochan and Reed (2005) emphasized,

Leaders of democratic schools must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, abilities, beliefs, and dispositions that will allow them to succeed. . . . It also requires a change in their educational preparation programs and in the organizational structures in which they operate. (p. 80)

In meeting the needs of a highly diverse society, Giroux (1994) recommended that schools of education need to encourage "teachers and administrators to undertake the language of social criticism, to display moral courage, and to connect rather than distance themselves from the most pressing problems and opportunities of the times" (p. 44). One of the pressing problems includes closing the educational disparity among ethnic and socioeconomic groups. As Reyes and Wagstaff (2005) stressed, "The most critical challenge to education today is to educate successful student populations that are ethnically and linguistically diverse often located in urban and underfunded schools" (p. 106). Inherent in this challenge is improving teaching and learning in schools (Elmore, 2005). The educational leader's role includes establishing strong relationships with students, parents, and the community; building social capital for students; and creating a school community wherein all are respected and valued (Reyes & Wagstaff, 2005). For systemic changes to occur in school practices, policies, and processes to promote equity and excellence in schools, leadership at all levels is needed (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003).

What Is Needed in Educational Leadership Programs

Kochan and Reed (2005) described the content and delivery that is needed in educational leadership programs stating,

The content and delivery of curriculum that will prepare individuals to build democratic environments must be infused with readings, experiences, and structures that foster democratic ideals. Thus, classroom texts and reading must come from diverse perspectives so that dialogue and discussion can include opportunities to develop listening skills, challenge beliefs and values, and engage in critiques of one's own ideas and the ideas of others, questioning the status quo. (p. 80)

At the core of the questioning, values of equity and social justice are important (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003), as well as, an inherent belief among school participants that change can occur (Dantley, 2005). In the design of educational leadership program, dialogue and discussion serve as ways that participants can model collaboration and engage in the processes that are essential in successful school leadership (Kochan & Reed, 2005). As part of the process, professors can model "the type of community we are encouraging our students to create" (Kochan & Reed, 2005, p. 81). Dantley (2005) suggested,

Rather than filling current school leaders' heads with more technical knowledge, professional development opportunities might include times of reflection when leaders are compelled to deal with critical issues in a nonthreatening environment. What is absolutely essential is a new way of perceiving the activities and responsibilities of school leadership in terms of purpose and learning. (p. 43)

As Bates (1984) argued, "Language is not only a tool of critical reflection through which we may demystify our world but also the medium of action through which we shape it" (pp. 268-269). Anderson (1996) stressed, "This new administrative discourse must not only critique current practices, but also provide a vision of what a democratic school culture would look like" (p. 961).

Wheatley (2002) emphasized the power of dialogue by stating, "The very simple process of council takes us to a place of deep connection with one another. And, as we slow down the conversation to a pace that encourages

thinking, we become wise and courageous actors in our world" (p. 9). She further added, "Real change begins with the simple act of people talking about what they care about" (p. 22). Wheatley (2002) emphasized, "I think the greatest source of courage is to realize that if we don't act, nothing will change for the better" (p. 27). Donaldson (2001) stressed that leadership without action is shallow and artificial. Educational leadership preparation programs provide an opportunity for reflection and dialogue about important issues of educational practice and can influence transformative actions in schools (Dantley, 2005).

Context for the Study

A decade serves as a juncture, a marker in time, and is frequently a time when individuals contemplate the previous ten years while considering the decade to come. As we enter the tenth year for a newly developed doctoral program in educational leadership, we also are aware of the immense criticisms that have continued to be waged concerning educational leadership preparation programs. Reforms offered in the last ten years have included both suggestions for structure, process, content and delivery. The Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) began in this period of reform. While much of the criticism was being waged against principal preparation programs in the 90s, educational leadership doctoral programs were also targets of the attacks and, in turn, responded to the criticisms by enacting new forms of delivery such as cohort grouping, content focused upon problems of practice and issues of social justice and design features of multiple forms of assessment, such as, portfolio assessment. In the 90s, the Danforth Foundation funded reform efforts of leadership preparation programs on both the masters and doctoral levels, and many of these institutions were highlighted in the books entitled The Landscape of Leadership Preparation: Reframing the Educational of School Administrators (Murphy, 1992) and Preparing Tomorrow's School Leaders: Alternative Designs (Murphy, 1993). These changes included new forms of delivery, instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

In 1997, as we began the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU), recommendations for

improvement of doctoral programs were paramount in the literature. Problem based learning, inclusion of discussion of research early in the program as a thread throughout, and a cohort design were explained in narrative accounts of innovative programs. In planning for our doctoral program, faculty members interviewed individuals from Danforth participants and considered design and delivery features that could strengthen our program. We met with practitioners and heard the call for rigor. We listened to presenters at the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration and were particularly influenced by the design of the doctoral program at University of Colorado at Denver. Later, we invited Rod Muth of University of Denver to visit our program as an outside reviewer prior to the process of review that was required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Ideas we incorporated into the program were an early emphasis on research at the beginning of the program and an integral thread throughout rather than a research sequence toward the end, synthesis classes with a portfolio process of assessment rather than a traditional comprehensive exam, the development of a theme throughout the program reflective of our core beliefs, an emphasis on dialogue and reflection as critical components of course delivery, a cohort design with sequenced courses, and internships linking the students' goals with experiential learning opportunities.

As a precursor to program development, as a doctoral faculty council, we identified tenets of our program as an emphasis on social justice, reflective practice, scholar-practitioner leadership, an ethic of care, and democratic leadership. The over-riding theme is scholar- practitioner leadership, and students are challenged in the orientation, in courses and in evaluative processes to consider, "What does it truly mean to be a scholar-practitioner leader?" An emphasis is on each student's construction of the term's meaning. In a paper in the first course, students are asked to define scholar-practitioner leaders. In the internship evaluation questions, students are asked to consider ways the internship encouraged growth as a scholar-practitioner leader. In focus groups at the end of the year, students are asked to reflect upon the value of the portfolio process in their development as scholar-practitioner leaders, the value of the internship, and the value of the courses. Major tenets of the program, such as, of social justice and an ethic of care are reinforced through the portfolio process in which students make

portfolio presentations sharing three to six themes that have emerged for them in their growth as scholar practitioner leaders. An emphasis of the program is reading, writing, dialogue, reflection, research, critical inquiry and positive action.

I serve as a member of the doctoral faculty in a doctoral program for educational leadership that was first approved in 1997 to offer classes to the first cohort of students and have taught in the program since its approval. The program was designed in a decade of reform to incorporate many recommendations stemming from the Danforth funded educational leadership preparation reform efforts, such as, cohort grouping, portfolio assessment, and a curriculum focused on development of critical inquiry skills, social justice and ethical practice as scholar-practitioner leaders, and these programmatic features have endured.

Ten cohorts have participated in the program through the initial coursework that begins each summer and continues with sequenced coursework throughout a two and a half year time period prior to the dissertation course hours. The program includes delivery features of two internships that are designed to meet students' professional goals, a synthesis course each summer in which connections are strengthened between courses with portfolio assessment of the year's work as an integral component of each synthesis course. The entire program is designed to develop students as scholar-practitioner leaders with students and professors engaging in critical analysis of both research literature and problems of practice with a central focus on issues of school improvement.

The mission statement of the doctoral program is:

To prepare educational leaders who through collaborative partnerships, professional service, teaching, and research will contribute to the transformation of schools to higher levels of student achievement and success.

Representative goals for the program include:

- To produce field-based research that links university inquiry with the public schools.

- To promote school-community-university collaborative relationships, developing linkages between the public schools and the university, thereby strengthening the quality of education.
- To address challenges and concerns of regional importance with a major emphasis on research that focuses on increasing academic success of students.
- To retain highly qualified educational leaders within the region, by selective admissions' process to the program that will assist in continuous renewal of administrators of excellence.

Basic tenets of the doctoral program as defined by the doctoral faculty are:

The educational leader must be highly well read, reflecting the highest standards of scholarship.

The educational leader must exhibit judgment in the application of concepts and theories.

The educational leader must engage in the identification of problems and the analysis of solutions.

The educational leader must be a reflective practitioner who is adept in the leadership of change efforts for continuous improvement.

The educational leader must demonstrate ethical standards in the application of concepts, theories, and specific action plans to make a difference.

The ongoing collaborative work of the doctoral faculty has resulted in a refinement of departmental program beliefs from the general statements that were first generated to more specific belief statements:

We believe leaders must

- Model, encourage, and instill the ethic of lifelong learning.
- Maintain a dialectic relationship with teaching and learning.
- Engage in and encourage self-critical examination.
- Assume moral, ethical, and social responsibility

- Encourage construction of self-identity as it relates to practice.
- Recognize that a professional learning community and self-renewing organization develops the capacity of individual leaders.
- Recognize that change is constant and accept responsibility to shape the direction of change.
- Recognize and honor diversity as an essential element for improving the human condition.
- Facilitate building and sustaining inclusive and democratic communities.
- Recognize that leadership involves reciprocal processes of dialogue requiring a deep understanding of language, thought, and conversation within organizational and social contexts.

In addition to three electives in the program, core courses in the doctoral program include: Connecting Leadership Theory and Practice, Exploring Contemporary and Emerging Paradigms of Educational Research, Examining the Dynamics of Organizational and Human Interaction within Educational Systems, Bringing Critical Voice to the Design, Analysis, and Implementation of Educational Policy, Operationalizing the Dynamics of Change in Educational Systems, Examining Human Inquiry Systems, Inquiring into the Foundations of Ethics and Philosophy of School Leaders, Designing Research within Educational Settings, Conceptualizing Scholar-Practitioner Models of Leadership, Investigating Cultural and Societal Patterns, Synthesis Seminar I and II, and Developing the Dissertation Research Proposal.

Students complete a dissertation as part of the requirements of the 66 semester credit hour program.

Methodology

Along with the attacks against educational leadership doctoral programs are recommendations emphasizing the importance of creating sessions for dialogue and critical analysis of important challenges facing schools (Dantley, 2005). Some writers, rather than calling for an elimination of EdD programs, describe the type of programs needed as ones that promote dialogue, critical inquiry, and social justice to prepare leaders who will work to enact needed changes in schools (Kochan & Reed, 2005). Program

implementation over a ten year period for a new doctoral program was examined to discern practices and processes that students identified as important in their growth as scholar-practitioner leaders. Specifically, the research question was: What are the important processes and practices in the doctoral program for student development as scholar-practitioner leaders?

A mixed method methodology was employed for program evaluation including multiple data sources. Focus groups with doctoral students as part of program evaluation over a ten-year span of time were conducted. These group interviews were audio taped, and follow-up was provided through additional questions, as needed, to attain a depth of understanding of the respondent's views. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed to discern emergent themes. Member checks were attained during the interview process as the interviewer asked for further clarification when meanings were unclear. In addition, two surveys of graduates, reflective comments in students' portfolios and portfolio presentations, and critical incident narratives served as data sources. Trustworthiness of the data was maintained by keeping an audit trail of all transcriptions and field notes. Triangulation was achieved through analysis of the multiple data sources.

Findings

Research Question

What are the important processes and practices in the doctoral program for student development as scholar-practitioner leaders?

Important processes and practices in the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at Stephen F. Austin State University for student development as scholar-practitioner leaders were dialogue and critical inquiry concerning readings and problems of practice. Professors of the doctoral courses have encouraged dialogue and critical inquiry through course design and delivery. The professors serve as the facilitators of learning with the classroom setting arranged to be conducive to the engagement of students in dialogue and critical inquiry through a circular arrangement of the professor and students. A student commented about her experience in the doctoral program that she is now "reading texts with different eyes." Another student

described her experience in the doctoral program through a theme of illumination wherein she moved from someone else lighting the candles in the darkness to lighting the candles herself. Still another student commented that he was always taught to question, yet through the readings and papers completed during the doctoral program, his perspective has deepened. Another student described her growth succinctly by saying, "I am not the same as before the doctoral program." Another added,

In reflection on the program, I can honestly say that the course work, professors, and cohort have impacted my life, both personally and professionally, in a way that will have a life long effect. My prayer is that I have been able to impact others through this program and that I will be able to utilize this knowledge to continue making a difference in education and in life.

Each of the students expressed beliefs that the changes that had been prompted by experiences in the doctoral program have been positive changes in their lives.

The word dialogue in Latin means, "to bring about change." The result of dialogue should be change in which both the teacher and student grow and benefit from the discussion. In listening to faculty members' comments about experiences in teaching in the doctoral program in educational leadership, the growth is reciprocal between faculty and students. For example, one new faculty member commented, "I have grown as much from teaching in this program as I did within the doctoral program I completed." A student's representative comment was, "I am continually finding unexpected critical moments throughout the course of study. I change, go forward, and then go back again, but I'm always moving, and I never arrive at the same spot where I was before." Another student commented,

I am not the same person as I was when I began this program. My mind is synthesizing information, and I am asking critical questions. I have more questions to ask. I feel that I have shifted into a new gear that I didn't know even existed.

Personal growth included gaining consciousness of new realities through readings, dialogue, and self-reflection. The dialogue and critical analysis began the process of helping the student to realize that there are possibilities beyond their immediate situation. Many students from the doctoral program commented, "I feel more confident now."

The process of preparing a portfolio each year based on the courses that had been completed served as a stimulus for self-reflection and critical analysis concerning the role of a scholar-practitioner leader. A student explained, "Preparing for our portfolio presentations focused our attention on the meaning of scholar-practitioner." Still another added, "Preparing for our presentations helped us define the praxis between practice and theory, and this has helped me define the importance of research and theory in the realm of education." In reflections provided during presentations of the portfolios, students discussed their transformational learning. One student described his transformation from viewing things in an isolated manner to an integrated level. Another student commented that he now feels more confident, conscientious, and critical in his scholarship and has moved from an autocratic to a collaborative leader as he has recognized more fully the true meaning of a scholar-practitioner leader. Another student described her personal growth in moving to the role of caring "about" others rather than caring "for" others. One additional student described her transformation during the doctoral program as development of her mind, body, and spirit as a scholar-practitioner leader with and for others. Yet, another student acknowledged that he has seen a change in what he says and does as his knowledge base has expanded during this program. One student summarized his growth as a leader as a work in progress on the path to becoming a better person.

Students in the doctoral program expressed dimensions of their own hope and sense of social justice that had been strengthened through participation in the program. As a student commented, "I have gained a liberated voice, a voice to right the unjust." Another student described his growth to a "sense of restored hope and an intense desire to provide that sense of hope to others each day." Currently, he feels that African-Americans are "left behind" in the teaching profession which is a reality that he intends to influence so that the present lost opportunities do not continue. He is

hopeful that he can influence that change. Another student chronicled his own life experiences to illustrate his belief that educators can and must positively impact change and emphasized that his sense of urgency to influence positive change had intensified through his doctoral studies.

Problem solving education "strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 68). Because the problems are real, not merely theoretical, there is more meaning. This type of adult education is critical in helping students gain consciousness that they can have a role in the transformation of the world. A student stressed,

After developing my second portfolio presentation, I could feel connections with literature and theory never before felt by me. I spoke of Freire's unfinishedness as human beings last summer, but feel I truly have acquired his meaning of the concept. My purpose as a doctoral student and scholar-practitioner is to continue this journey for the rest of my life. I am continually advancing on my own personal journey. That journey includes all aspects of my life, and will continue to be enriched because of my doctoral experiences.

An additional student's reflection described the impact of the program on practice as he commented, "First, the change theory course in the fall caused me to reflect on my beliefs about education and life's important issues." Another stated, "Being a first year principal, I not only read about change, I've been in the web of change. What I've learned about change is that it always occurs, and it is important for a leader to develop the skills to work within that change."

Thematic investigation and problem-posing are processes used in adult learning that can lead to change. Through a program of doctoral studies built around the theme of developing scholar-practitioner leaders, students are challenged to rethink assumptions, critically analyze research, and reflexively consider theories and ideas that are being read. Through a recursive process of writing, reading, and dialogue, the students' inquiry skills and resolve are strengthened to "make a positive difference in this world."

Moral purpose is an important component of the doctoral program at SFA. Although a course on ethics is included in the course sequence, the discussion of ethics and moral purpose is not relegated to only one class. A philosophy of caring and social justice is also proposed. As one student commented, "I have grown more understanding and compassionate through greater purpose, focus, and direction during my doctoral studies." Another student chronicled ways her readings, reflection, and critical inquiry have influenced her dissertation focus on the "ethic of care" and her own growth as a scholar-practitioner leader. Still another student poignantly expressed the importance of caring about each student's future in ways that can be translated in real actions that affect students' lives. Students' voices reaffirm the aspects of the program that foster dialogue and critical inquiry that influence practice.

Conclusion

Instead of a call for further segmenting EdD and PhD programs as preparation for practice or preparation for scholarship, this study suggests the value students attest to an emphasis on both scholarship and practice in their preparation as scholar-practitioner leaders who will make a true difference in schools and university settings. Students' voices suggest that important processes in the doctoral program for the student's development as a scholar-practitioner leader include dialogue and critical inquiry. Important practices that support the processes include a portfolio assessment process designed to make critical connections between theory and practice. The findings suggest that high quality EdD programs have the opportunity of enriching students' lives and merging theory and practice to prepare school leaders who will work as practitioners to transform schools or as university professors. Rather than proclaiming sweeping generalizations of problems in EdD programs and issuing a call for redesign, this study suggests the value of opportunities for dialogue; in-depth study; extensive reading, writing, and reflective opportunities that can be attained in an educational leadership doctoral program. Portfolio assessment was identified as a practice to support the processes. This study supports that educational leadership doctoral programs can serve as vital links in preparing educational leaders both as scholars and as practitioners.

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Author Biography

Betty J. Alford, PhD is chair of the Department of Secondary Education and Educational Leadership and professor at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, where she also serves as doctoral program coordinator for the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program. Dr. Alford has served as lead writer for U.S. Department of Education grants that have totaled over $10 million. She is Principal Investigator for the East Texas GEAR UP Project, a collaborative partnership grant with 10 partner schools, and Project Director for Project DEVELOP, a collaborative partnership grant for principal preparation with 21 partner schools. She teaches in the doctoral and principal preparation programs and has public school experience as a middle school principal, an assistant elementary principal, and a high school counselor in addition to teaching.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING DOCTORAL STUDIES: A TALE OF A COHORT MODEL

The quest for the doctorate degree in education equates to completing a marathon race that requires extensive training, undeterred endurance, and utter commitment to the educational process. Eager candidates who wish to enter a doctoral program undertake an extensive interview process, a lengthy application packet, and then wait—hopefully to be accepted. This degree represents the pinnacle of achievement for those in the field of education. Doors will open, opportunities will present themselves, and lives will change both professionally and personally. For those who seek the degree, the program design is just as important as personal determination.

Programs designed to attain the doctorate degree differ from university to university. Some colleges offer a once-a-month, intensive weekend program, while online programs entice candidates who are seeking a "quick" finish. Both of these program formats attract those who seek an individual road to completing the doctorate. However, a majority of university doctoral programs focuses on a cohort model of teaching and learning for the fulfillment of the degree.

Doctoral programs intent on producing and graduating competent candidates focus on certain crucial elements: a flexible program, a framework for structured learning, a cooperative and interactive learning community, and a personal connection that is woven throughout the experience (The Graduate Institute, 2006). The cohort model provides these essentials while giving voice and understanding to each candidate (The Graduate Institute, 2006). While the journey taken by each individual represents a unique story, the cohort group itself equally makes its own history.

Standard elements of a cohort designed program for completing the doctorate degree are based on the concept of creating a small, close-knit learning community. This band of committed hopefuls has been brought together for a shared purpose, the completion of a desired goal (Fenning, 2004). Throughout the learning process, these candidates will be asked to work together, learn together, and create something more valuable as a group than they could have ever created as individuals.

Sims and Sims (2006) state that learning is a direct product of synergetic events which take place between people and events or what occurs in their environment. Equally, they regard learning as a by product of knowledge. McKeachie (1991) shares the concept that people are born to learn and to be continually engaged in of learning. Through interaction, coursework, group assignments, and high expectations, learning for a cohort is ongoing. However, the learning expectations established by the university and completed by candidates do not exist in a vacuum; the influence of the teaching factor also plays a prominent role in a cohort's development.

Candidates who seek the doctorate degree deserve exemplary programs and highly qualified instructors. Membership in this pool of professionals enriches and expands the learning experiences of each candidate as he or she grows and develops in the program (Haworth & Conrad, 1997). Classroom leaders are present to "unleash the strengths, talents, and passions of those he or she serves" (Jennings & Stahl-West, 2003, p. 14). These servant leaders found in doctoral programs not only promote extensive thinking but also encourage the building of the relationships formed through the cohort experience.

When joining a cohort, individuals retain a small portion of their own identity while the majority of their thoughts and actions meld into the making of a cohesive group. Cohorts give candidates the opportunity to create a standard of continuous support, which in turn supports the interdependence among members of the group (Norris & Barnett, 1994). The bond between the individuals and each faculty member becomes apparent during this process (Haworth & Conrad, 1997). Norris and Barnett (1994) best describe the transformation that takes place with the individuals as the cohort model begins to evolve,

Cohesive groups exude a mutual respect for one another—a recognition of individual differences and an appreciation of individual strengths. An emotional safety net results from this exchange, allowing individuals to reveal themselves to one another. (p. 5)

As the group grows to its possible potential, so too, grows each individual within the group (Norris & Barnett, 1994). Part of the responsibility for ensuring this transference takes place rests with the instructors. Galvin

(1991) contends that "the learning environment fosters both teachers' and students' willingness to freely exchange ideas, feelings, questions, and dispute with comfort, listen carefully to others, and apply, analyze, and evaluate with freedom" (p. 263).

Despite the type of program design found in doctoral programs, the effect on the individual candidate impacts the learning that takes place and the creation of lasting

knowledge. The cohort model clearly lends itself to providing a means to achieve the doctorate degree while establishing a meaningful and successful learning community. Through the direction of committed professors and candidates, the dream of achieving a doctorate degree in education is possible.

A Personal Journey

Sitting before a panel of professors can be nerve-wracking, especially when these representative faculty members hold the fate of aspiring doctoral candidates in their hands. The referral packet completed, the reference letter submitted, and now the final decision has to be made. In my role as a doctoral applicant, I can only remember one question from that process, "Why are you seeking this degree?" This prompt did require some reflective thinking. Why was I willing to spend almost 3 years of my life carpooling, missing family vacations, and letting my house become a model for the television show, Can This House Be Saved? Why would I voluntarily choose a day at the library researching my topic instead of spending it with a Harlequin Romance novel and ice cream bonbons? After those thoughts flew through my mind, I still found myself facing the panel that was patiently awaiting my response. I leaned forward, placed my crossed hands in front of me and with a sound declaration said, "It's my turn. It's my turn to think of my dreams, my goals, and my wants. With this degree, I will fulfill my quest to be a college professor. It's my turn." The letter of acceptance came a few weeks later, a catalyst for one of the most life-altering events I have ever experienced.

As the Learning Generation (2005) attests, "The genesis of a cohort begins when the cohort team comes together…" (p. 7). That was exactly what

happened when the seventh doctoral cohort at Sam Houston State University, Texas, met for the first time in April 2002. Present were teachers, curriculum directors, assistant principals, principals, and superintendents. Each would soon lose his or her well-earned titles for a membership in this cohort. It soon became clear that these 12 strangers considered themselves equals and that they brought unique and individual gifts and talents to the group. Roles were established that very night and remained in place for the duration of the learning process. From within this group arose a cheerleader, a pragmatic thinker, an interpreter, a word monger, a comic, a lady, and an Earth mother. The establishment of these individual roles, decided early, had staying power within our cohort for the next 2 ½ years. That first meeting not only introduced the group members to each other but it produced Cohort VII's mission statement: to meet or exceed the expectations of any cohort that had come before us and to leave a reputation for future cohorts to aspire to. With the inception of this goal, Cohort VII members began the journey, together, to acquire the doctorate degree.

On that same night while Cohort VII was finding its way, a sister cohort started on a similar path. This group mirrored our activities. In the past, a few of the cohorts had developed tendencies of competitiveness. After hearing this had occurred, the members of Cohort VII and Cohort VIII collectively decided to ensure this mentality would not continue. From that point on, "Cohort 78" was established. Lifelong friendships were formed within both cohorts, expected duties were shared between them, and mutual respect grew as the months together turned into years.

For the next 2 years, Cohort VII exemplified the cohort model of learning. As each course developed, challenging assignments and presentations proved Cohort VII was determined to achieve its goal. In accordance with Norris and Barnett (1994) who agreed that in order for an individual to develop, the group must equally develop through collaboration and group dynamics. Cohort VII proved this principle to be the case by bringing enthusiasm, excitement, and collegiality to each class and adventure. Slowly the cohort began to be transformed because of the individuals that made up the group. As we began the growth process, this same phenomenon was happening as Cohorts VII and VII were being formed into

the "Great 78." This was never more evident than when Cohort 78 took a trip to Mexico to complete our independent studies in the summer of 2003.

Haworth and Conrad (1997) have contended that as a cohort group develops so do the skills of communication and teamwork. Our trip to Mexico found us all going in different directions in terms of research but united in having fun and enjoying our time together. On one such adventure, the two cohorts became bonded in trust by a learning experience.

For a long time, Mexico City has been known for its cultural endeavors. One free afternoon, we took a trip to a museum and zoo. We were asked to stay together as much as possible and then to meet back at a certain time and place. This rule was established for our safety and welfare. At some point during our trip, one of our cohort members became separated from the group and had not returned to the meeting place. With all the members of the cohorts being decision-makers within their respective schools, plans of action were immediately set in place. Some returned to the hotel to await the return of the missing member. Others created a search party with the intent of combing the zoo area in hopes of finding him. After most of the group had returned back to the hotel, the lost individual was seen strolling toward the hotel, shocked that anyone had worried about him. So began the Hines Rule of Separation.

Simply stated, the Hines Rule of Separation stipulated that in the event that any cohort member found him or herself to be apart from the group, two things needed to be understood. First, such persons would be responsible for their own safety and subsequently, the return to the group. Second, the other members of the group would trust that person to take care of him or herself. In this way, the cohort members would be able to fulfill their tasks and responsibilities without the entire group being affected. From the conception of the rule, we developed a deeper appreciation and respect for the leadership skills undertaken as a result of an unexpected event. Haworth and Conrad (1997) would have been proud to see their beliefs in action, as teamwork actually led both cohorts to develop a means of communication that lasted throughout our stay in Mexico.

Another defining moment for Cohort VII did not originate from a trip or an assignment, but developed as a reflection of the relationship between the

cohort and the professors in the program. As our group began to be defined as dependable and trustworthy, the role of the professors started changing. At the onset of our coursework and classes, many of the professors took on the traditional role of an instructor who uses direct teaching, guided lessons, and tried and true assignments. After several months, the professors recognized that this cohort was different. The faculty actually began to see their roles more as facilitators setting in motion the learning that would take place (The Learning Generation, 2005). In other words, they had become an embedded part of our learning process. This transformation of thought and pedagogy allowed us to establish mutual feelings of respect and trust.

Haworth and Conrad (1997) have noticed that an instructional faculty involved with successful cohort programs actually become co-learners in the process. Each of the professors was experts in his and her respective fields, a matter that was clearly reflected in everyone's instructional methods. Through their willingness to allow the cohort to be responsible for part of their learning, these professors placed aside their role as a lead teacher and chose to become immersed as a participant in the learning process so the leadership endeavor was shared.

This frame of thought was truly evident when a visiting professor filled in for one of our instructors. As the class began, he encountered 12 eager, prepared, and opinionated doctoral candidates. Once the assignment was made, we were absorbed in our small groups with little direction necessary. He finally left the room leaving us on our own. When he returned later, the task was completed; he was astonished to see how the dynamics of the group had actually moved him from instructor to facilitator in the learning process. Cohort VII had reached the point that Carr (2006) has described as a democratic setting that established the understanding of teaching and, more importantly, learning.

One could assume that this new found discovery might cause the cohort to develop an air of superiority. Because of our original belief statement, none of us would have allowed that to happen. Yet, questions about this phenomenon occurring with Cohort VII still surfaced. In fact, one professor devoted an entire night to explore what was happening to the group. This group of would be strangers exemplified the cohort model of learning. We

worked together, took care of each other, provided ongoing support, and reached beyond Monday and Tuesday nights to create something rarely seen. He marveled at how the learning for the group and the teaching of the instructors moved us from an ordinary to extraordinary cohort.

Beyond the learning experiences, the core subjects, and the class instruction, our cohort became a family. For over 2 years, we celebrated births, marriages, anniversaries, hospital stays, and even loss. With each personal goal achieved, we were equally met with the possibility of emotional risks. When we agreed to forego some of our individuality for the betterment of the group, we took on the responsibility to care for each other through various life events. This was especially felt when we lost our Jackie.

On the highest shelf in my office sits a picture of Cohort VII. Smiles on our faces and hope for our futures resounding in our hearts, we stand together on the steps of an old home just as we had done since that first night. Above me stands Jackie. She is poised as always with just the hint of a smile. I can recall her sweet, helpful disposition even to this day.

I received the news of her passing through an email. My mind could barely understand what it said. Jackie had been having some health problems and was admitted into the hospital for tests. She did not make it through the night. Something like this could not happen to Cohort VII. The cohort was blessed. This cohort was like no other. How could this pain have entered our family, but it did. Her loss still brings this Earth mother a knot in my throat and tears to my eye. All the magic that was created by Cohort VII could not console us as we said our goodbyes.

A quote from the author, Meg Cabot, best explained what I was feeling, "In order for people to be happy, sometimes they have to take risks. It's true these risks can put them in danger of being hurt" (The Quotations Page, www.quotationspage.com/subjects/risk, n.d.). The creation of the cohort had been filled with risks. We had to juggle personal and professional lives to achieve the doctorate. Our individuality became secondary as compared to the goals of the group. And with the development of our Cohort VII family, we placed our hearts and minds on the line. Patel (2006) confirmed this thinking when she wrote, "By avoiding risks, you may avoid some

suffering and sorrow, but you can't learn, feel, change, grow and love." In learning to care for each other, we put ourselves at risk to experience both the joy and the pain of our doctoral experience.

As I began to reflect on the journey that I had taken to achieve the doctorate, I also wondered if others in the "Great 78" felt the same way. In order to compare my personal thoughts with those of my fellow travelers, In August of 2006, I surveyed the members of both cohorts to determine how the experience had affected them. Of the 19 members of Cohort 78, 8 returned completed surveys.

When asked about their reasons for entering the doctoral program, the most common response reflected on how the degree had also been a lifelong ambition. One candidate wrote, "I had a lifelong desire to complete my doctorate. The access, timing, and type of program attracted me." While some believed that the completion of the degree was a means to open doors for them professionally, others began the journey to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the field of education. The reasons for seeking the degree ranged from personal to professional but, whatever the intent, the road traveled together was much easier to bear.

Who better to define a cohort than the members of a cohort? When Cohorts VII and VIII were asked to give their own definition of a cohort program, one common answer was evident: a set of people working together for a single goal. The cohort members used several words to define cohort, "… group, professional family, sharing group, team." One of the respondents added that because the cohort became such a positive experience for him, he was able to focus on the completion of the degree because he had been helped by others. Other students spoke of how the cohort model had been an opportunity to share responsibilities while encouraging others.

Another recurring theme that emerged from the survey data detailed the use of a cohort learning model to complete the doctorate degree. Common responses included how much easier the work load seemed because help was easily found within the peer group. Once the level of trust was established, some cohort members felt they had to work as hard as their fellow group members so to never disappoint anyone. Many spoke of the encouragement they felt from the others that helped to ignite an inner drive.

But primarily, the responses centered on how the completion of the degree would have been impossible without the support from their fellow cohort members. A member wrote, "I was continually supported in my efforts to complete my degree." Another member's statement completely defined this theme, "I could not have completed the program without the cohort model."

Beyond the course work, the expectations, and the commitment, many of the other members of the cohort did experience the same feelings of collegiality and family. Knowing how I personally felt about the program, I was surprised to see comments such as, "I would have made myself finish with or without my cohort…unfortunately I am such an individual that the cohort was fun, but not absolutely necessary, "and " …you know everyone and their quirks." The professional dimensions of the program and the personal reflections of the participants impacted every traveler that took the cohort path to acquire this degree. For us, the lessons learned, the bonding time, and the togetherness brought forth the experience of a lifetime.

As my eyes move to the top shelf in my office, the picture of my Cohort VII family smiles down on me as its members keep constant vigil. I am drawn to a quote by the Nobel Laureate, William Golding, "My yesterdays walk with me, they keep step, they are gray faces that peer over my shoulders," (www.brainyquote.com/quotes/m/megcabot228055/.html). The impact of my cohort experience began one night, sitting at a table with 11 strangers, who were about to take the journey of a lifetime. Even now, almost 3 years later, the picture of these hearty travelers brings back memories, feelings, and experiences that I hope shadow me for years to come.

Concluding Thoughts

The intent of this individual reflection was to explore the cohort leaning model as personally experienced and the impact this group experience had on those who undertook the journey of acquiring a doctorate degree. Becoming aware of learning as a community experience that was bound together by a common goal will influence the doctoral program, the aspiring candidates, and the instructional methods.

The eight question qualitative data collected sought to reinforce the shared experiences of the cohort members by gaining information regarding the

impact of collegial experiences, the creation of a sense of family, the role transformation of the instructor, and the development of lasting relationships.

Woven throughout the experience of the cohort model were opportunities for shared course work and collective learning events that were vital to both the success of the candidates and the completion of the degree. The candidates who sought the degree through this model were provided continual support and assistance as they developed their own sense of self-confidence. Equally, instructors who were willing and to become facilitators and co-learners in this educational process fostered the development of a successful cohort group. By examining the impact of the cohort model on achieving the doctorate degree in education, the strengths of the candidates as individuals and as group members can be recognized and fostered. Collegiality, mentoring, and creating lasting support systems are only a few of the gains members can experience from committing to the cohort model. With this understanding of the inner workings of a cohort learning model and the relationships that develop through it, aspiring candidates can successfully attain the doctoral degree.

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Author Biography

Janet L. Tareilo is currently an assistant professor at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA). This is her first year as a full-time professor after serving as an adjunct professor for the university for two. During the time she has been with SFA, she has written projects for NCPEA-Connexions, a chapter in an upcoming book regarding social justice, presented at the NCPEA Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, and has begun the process of writing a book about surviving the principalship. At this time, she also serves as a reviewer for NCPEA Connexions Project.

Confessions of a Doctoral Supervisor: Valuing Interdependence Rooted in a Mentoring Creed

I believe that the individual who is to be educated is a social individual, and that society is an organic union of individuals. (John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," as cited in Flinders & Thornton, 1929/2004, p. 18)

Situating the Supervisory Self

Doctoral students are by their very nature social creatures, and those who experience an "organic union" with others have a far better chance of becoming productive, skilled researchers and lifelong learners. Many studies have found that "cooperative efforts produce higher achievement than do competitive or individualistic efforts" (Johnson & Johnson, 1998, p. 9; see also Johnson, 2003; Winston, 2006). In this confessional essay, I situate myself as a doctoral supervisor reflecting on the value of positive interdependent learning and, as a vehicle for this, research support groups. I have come to realize that my core values are situated, biased, and not generally representative of all of my students, a story I share in this essay. The personal–confessional genre is one in which "confessors" reveal their subjectivities and engage in reflective thinking in ways that potentially shape educational discourse (Bleakley, 2000; see also Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). In keeping with social theorist C. Wright Mills's conception of research (1959), I believe that "personal troubles" should not be presented merely as troubles but rather "understood in terms of public issues" (p. 226).

My personal philosophy as a supervisor of doctoral students is that their ability to function interdependently facilitates positive relationships, critical skills development, and academic success. This belief guides my actions and practices, writing and scholarship. No matter how unconscious, tensions among independence, interdependence, and dependence are probably felt by all doctoral students and their faculty supervisors within the everyday world of graduate school. Herein I focus on social interdependence as the linchpin of student growth and faculty efficacy; it is founded on the premise—long established in the psychological literature— that "knowledge is social, constructed from cooperative efforts to learn, understand, and solve problems" and that it "exists when individuals share

common goals and each other's outcomes are affected by the actions of the others" (Johnson & Johnson, 1998, p. 3). Moreover, interdependence can even be thought of as indispensable to educational reform, as Fullan (2006) has argued in Turnaround Leadership that "all successful strategies are socially based and action oriented" (p. 44).

In 2000, I founded Writers in Training (WIT), a semi-formal doctoral cohort that is affiliated with a public doctoral/research university extensive located in Florida, the institution in which I formerly worked. The group includes males, females, and various ethnicities; the students are all experienced teachers who perform leadership roles in their schools (e.g., department head, assistant principal, principal) and districts (e.g., curriculum specialist, assistant superintendent). In 2007 I was supervising 10 students—the number has been much larger in the past, but approximately two graduate each year with their doctorates.

Theorizing Interdependence in Graduate Education

Cohort mentoring, a form of group learning between faculty and students (Mullen, 2005) uses a team-based transformational model that makes group work the primary method of support, performance, and achievement (Michaelsen, Knight, & Fink, 2002). A gestalt philosophy of cohort mentoring honors "the whole," reflected in the interdependence members share and the dynamic changes that occur within the group and each individual. At the doctoral level, the group functions as a cohort that joins doctoral students and their academic mentor(s) for a specified number of years and presumes a deeply relational, lifelong model of learning and leading (Mullen, 2005; Piantanida & Garman, 1999). Students in cohort mentoring situations "practice the very skills, thinking, and capacities that are needed to demonstrate to, and elicit from, others" (Mullen & Kealy, 1999, p. 36). In the educational leadership field, where school projects, programs, and processes depend on cooperative teamwork, it only makes sense to practice this skill within small groups.

The comentoring or collaborative structure of learning enables individuals who relate well as colleagues to progress together. A focus on mutuality stresses interdependent, reciprocal learning among all members, regardless of their status and rank within the group. The issue of belonging is also

readily apparent, with membership extended to marginalized and underrepresented groups. Aligned with social justice agendas, academic mentors enhance diversity by including students of color in their learning circles and, in gender-dominated disciplines, females or males. They also affirm difference by discouraging cloning of faculty or student mentors, and by encouraging diversity with respect to topics of inquiry, in addition to racial, ethnic, and sexual identifications.

Applied to a support group context, co-mentoring can help members transcend problems inherent in one-to-one mentoring. For example, the accomplishments of school practitioner groups that exhibit a range in learning expertise can exceed those of a mentoring dyad. As another example, the important but unsettled issue of whether it is critical to construct mentor pairing with respect to similarities in gender, ethnicity, age, and discipline (e.g., Wilson, Pereira, & Valentine, 2002) becomes greatly diminished when groups are configured to reflect diversity and when knowledge and discovery are shared by the membership. Some students who represent traditionally disadvantaged groups may feel that mentors who are, for instance, ethnic would be more suitable but nonetheless draw strength from peers to whom they can best relate. And women university students, who often prefer female mentors because of the opening they perceive for personal contact and the value placed on interpersonal skills (Wilson et al., 2002), can also derive satisfaction from groups led by male mentors.

Journaling as Research Method

The mentoring creed I next outline and the real-life dilemmas I describe of supervisory relationships followed by synergistic breakthroughs are both products of personal journaling and empirical analysis. Since 2000 I have been reflectively documenting the behavior and progress of the WIT cohort. Here I attempt to briefly "story" two types of dynamics—one, involving interdependence in mentoring as illustrated through problematic and unresolved interactions in my role as major professor, and two, regarding constructive learning and growth at the level of the group. For this dual purpose I have used current entries in my mentoring journal and reports of the WIT cohort (i.e., Mullen, 2005; Mullen, in press) as data sources.

My Mentoring Creed

Based on the insights I have been afforded over time as an active doctoral supervisor, I have established ground rules that present the WIT group with structure and transparent expectations. The use of rules with adult learners, especially in a non-coursework context, does not sit easily with me. People should be sufficiently self-directed and astute enough to pick up on what keeps a community growing without recourse to what seems like child-like systems; moreover, rules seem to contradict the freedom and autonomy that should be the bedrock of doctoral education. However, rules have proven necessary for groups like the WIT cohort to survive and grow as a disciplined, scholarly unit, and they help satisfy a basic component of cooperative groups: "individual and group accountability" (Johnson & Johnson, 1998, p. 20; also Mullen, 2005). Rules ensure common understandings that help individuals function and interact, which in turn facilitates clear expectations, a safe and open environment, healthy relationships, and achievable learning outcomes.

My mentoring creed is a belief statement that was inspired by Dewey's "My Pedagogic Creed" in which he states, "I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race" (as cited in Flinders & Thornton, 1929/2004, p. 17). Through my creed, the doctoral students who commit to working with me come to intimately know what I believe helps organize our learning in a particular direction. I developed the creed and its embedded belief systems and rules as lessons learned became apparent—as conversations occurred and situations arose within the WIT cohort, identification of expected human conduct and performance were made possible. I formulated tentative understandings and, in an early phase of the cohort's development, collective input and agreements followed. The expectations centered on what I personally stand for and what the group itself stands for, as well as those academic socialization processes that are critical to any doctoral student's induction. Adjustments based on my own reflections and feedback of the members has occurred periodically and will continue to.

My Mentoring Creed and Rules

I believe that there are certain steps that facilitate the professional and academic development of those who become my doctoral students.

1. Students attend scheduled meetings whenever possible. At these sessions they both accept and provide the assistance attending members need to grow and develop as scholars. This exchange occurs through reciprocal learning, constructive criticism, and a respectful attitude. Mutual growth takes root as a function of genuine interdependence and contribution as opposed to solely attending sessions where one's work is the primary focus.
2. Members practice sharing by extending their most cherished ideas and insights and circulating vital materials (e.g., completed programs of studies, approved dissertation proposals, instruments for data collection) when requested. Through such means as meetings and electronic mail, students exchange information, advice, and documents to support one another's goals.
3. Members check the listserv regularly for announcements and messages concerning their program, department/college/university events, and meetings. Student files (e.g., proposals) are posted in advance of meetings: Members print them, read them, and make notations. They come prepared to each session. They also regularly check their email account for messages from their major professor.
4. Where applicable, students provide the student manager with material (e.g., dissertation proposal, draft chapters, conference proposal, data for interrater reliability analysis) 1 week in advance to be placed on the monthly agenda.
5. Members participate in yearly assessments of the group. The anonymous survey has been developed by their major professor and validated by the cohort (the student manager serves as point person); the results identify areas of strength and weakness at the group level and ultimately pinpoint areas possibly needing improvement and follow-up.

I believe that students should respect other adults, tolerate different points of view, and make considerable efforts to intellectually and socially motivate one another while contributing to the fostering of a safe learning environment.

1. Students respect all members and exhibit kindness, tolerance, and understanding but also strive for rigor in their feedback on scholarly writing and research. Importantly, they also participate in fostering a safe learning environment for all group members.
2. Members accept constructive criticism graciously, monitor personal defenses, and internalize the wisdom and advice of their peers. Respecting others does not mean blind conformity or silence—if they have a point of view different from others, they express it without being confrontational.
3. Members actively teach and learn from their peers and motivate one another to stay the course, read vigorously, produce quality work, and prepare for all exams, meetings, and defenses.
4. Students share concerns with their major professor that pertain to their work and development or that could impede their academic progress. They are honest and transparent.
5. Students avoid gossip and slander and think before speaking about others, and they also steer clear of closed cliques.

I believe that students need to do certain things to facilitate their degree program and university business and support their progress and success.

1. Students create a timeline and share it electronically with their major professor for comment early in the program—when a student veers off course, this is to be noted, preferably with reasons briefly stated. A copy of the adjusted timeline is forwarded to one's supervisor.
2. Students always "cc" the major professor on official university business (which obviously does not include messages they send to course instructors, peers, etc.).
3. Members respond to the major professor's requests that pertain to one's program and progress and in a timely manner (e.g., thoughtfully preparing their program of study; reserving rooms and equipment for meetings and defenses; sending email reminders to committee members prior to meetings; unless otherwise negotiated, providing committee members with hard copies and e-copies of all thesis documents).
4. Members attend students' defenses for the proposal and final dissertation as often as possible, especially in their areas of interest,

and certainly as their own defense dates approach. They take notes and share them at an upcoming meeting.

5. Students forward all requested materials pertaining to the dissertation to the college, graduate school, and library. In a timely manner, they provide a bound copy of the thesis/dissertation to their major professor and copies to the committee.

Johnson and Johnson (1998) refer to "promotive interaction" as that which "occurs as individuals encourage and facilitate each other's efforts to reach [a] group's goals" (p. 6). All of the components they identify for mutual promotion of success within groups is highlighted in my mentoring creed and, based on documented evidence, the WIT group itself (e.g., Mullen, 2005; Mullen, in press). Notably, Johnson and Johnson specify (with descriptions provided in their article) the importance of

- Giving and receiving help and assistance (both task-related and personal)
- Exchanging resources and information
- Giving and receiving feedback on task-work and teamwork behaviors
- Challenging each other's reasoning
- Advocating increased efforts to achieve
- Mutually influencing each other's reasoning and behavior
- Engaging in the interpersonal and small group skills needed for effective teamwork
- Processing how effectively group members are working together and how the group's effectiveness can be continuously improved. (pp. 6–7)

Orientation to the Stories

While it is important for faculty mentors to "remain sensitive to issues of biological sex, gender socialization, and sexual orientation," they should "avoid assuming that these factors alone will predict salient mentoring needs, relational styles, or professional concerns" (Johnson, 2007, p. 153). This framework is intended to guide the interpretation of my stories. The encounters I have with the members at times present dilemmas in such areas as poor writing, communication, and motivation and defense posturing around critical feedback; several even ignore the very rules that have formed the contractual backbone of our mentoring relationship.

However, it would be misleading to assert that these particular individuals do this systematically or intentionally, or that they are anything less than caring or well liked. As will be revealed, the issue of overplayed independence or underplayed interdependence arises for certain WITs in relationship to the group and myself, their female doctoral supervisor.

Real-Life Dilemmas Involving Ground Rules

Real-life social conflict and change is endemic to any student's doctoral journey and group experience, just as it is for any faculty mentor. Struggle and resistance between professors and students can occur at the developmental juncture involving interdependence. In the WIT group, some members while talented and kindhearted do not necessarily respond in a timely manner to my requests that directly involve their own progress and success. For example, regarding the invitations to the WIT meetings and student defenses, those not attending sometimes preface that they will have to make sacrifices (e.g., take time away from family or friends or athletics); when present, they less frequently have the reading done in advance, which is apparent because there are no handwritten notes on their materials (our practice is to forward marked up copies to students whose work we are responding to) and because they interject comments of a general nature only.

One WIT informed me about 2 years ago that s/he would no longer be attending the WIT sessions; when I asked why, s/he responded that s/he no longer had anything to learn from anyone and that s/he could complete the program without the group's support, with my ongoing help merely implied. This same individual has been in candidacy for many years and is still stuck on completing the final chapters of the dissertation. In this case, ground rules 1–6 focused on group learning and sharing were discarded in one broad sweep. Ironically, it appears that this student's need to assert independence by discarding the very support of the group that had enabled momentum to be sustained not only prolonged program completion but also increased the odds of attrition.

I have noticed that some of the WITs are either more competitive than others or are simply more transparent about being so. Another student who was stuck in limbo for years only started to get back on track when one of

the WITs, who started at the same time, successfully completed the dissertation. After years of not showing up to the meetings in my home, this individual suddenly arrived well prepared with data collected and organized, as requested, the completed survey data had been arranged in easy-to-read tables. However, this individual had used another's exact table format and data arrangement to organize the results. Because other students' data templates had been made available prior to this instance, it seems more likely that this individual was finally moving ahead for the reason that peers who had entered the program in more recent years were already crossing over the finishing line.

Someone else resisted adhering to ground rule 12, often not cc'ing me on official correspondence. Rule 12 came about because I had noticed during my "green" days of doctoral supervision that university faculty and staff are apt to respond more quickly to students when the professor(s) involved is copied on important correspondence—this rule of thumb generally functions as an easy formula for protecting students, getting their inquiries heard, and moving them forward. It is obviously easier for professors to follow up where necessary if they have been copied onto the message by the student, which makes their association clear and relationship public. Because of this student's inconsistency, I reinforced the need to copy me on official university correspondence relevant to my function as dissertation supervisor me. In one such instance, while we were in the process of creating this individual's program of study and committee form, we found ourselves grappling with who the fourth committee person would be. I suggested that we seek special credentialing of a district superintendent, someone my student had studied with and someone with whom I respected. I indicated what needed to be done regarding emailing the staff member in charge who would outline the steps for us to follow. When my student got home, this individual asked that I write my request in an email, which I immediately did. Then my request was used to create a very long and windy email that distracted from the point at hand. When asked to edit the email, I did. The student thanked me for my response, saying that it had not been clear how much "schmoozing" was called for. In my email I reminded this person to cc me on the message. This did not occur. When I asked why, the individual responded that it had been an issue of personal independence and responsibility. Then, just 1 day after the student sent the email to the staff

director, this individual wrote that no response had been forthcoming, asking "What is our next step politically?"

I hesitated to respond right away so the student could reflect on the situation, hoping that the inner drama involving interdependency, independency, and independency might surface. I gave this individual a few days to think about what was happening without prompting reflection. From my own perspective, the student had been functioning in this instance, just like all of the others previously, in an interdependent manner, albeit it with a high degree of dependency; however, this individual was in a state of denial, possibly feeling deprived of personal effectiveness, spirit, or force. The student had wanted to assert a level of independence in this situation that was misleading and simply inappropriate given the reality of the circumstances. I wondered if this individual had overly personalized the rule that the major professor is to be cc'd on all official correspondence—it was as though I was being perceived as controlling or unreasonable.

Another possibility is that I was being seen as equivalent to the school employees within this person's charge. The use of plural first person perspective (i.e., "our next steps") surfacing in the student's lexicon struck me as discordant—this may have simply been intended as nothing more than a polite gesture, but then again it may have been a strategy to motivate me to do this person's thinking and work, which would have contradicted the assertion of independence made earlier.

Two days following the student's email asking about our next step, I received a more demanding one asking if I had heard from the staff member in question. I wrote back what is for me a dispassionate message: "Since I was not cc'd, you will need to follow up with [XYZ] and let me know—communications pertaining to one's degree program are generally the responsibility of the student." A statement to this effect appears in the graduate student handbook. A few minutes later the student responded,

Thanks for the information. I understand your position and I will inquire from [XYZ] when I have the opportunity. Please note that you were not included on the request since I assumed that it was my responsibility alone. I hope that you were not offended by either the incident or the attempt at humor in the successive emails.

This communication did not ring true—each and every embedded claim can be unpacked. In response to "I understand your position and I will inquire from [XYZ] when I have the opportunity," the student had always leaned on me to make inquiries on this individual's behalf and, by way of extension, to conduct follow-up. I find that my students who work full-time as over-extended administrators often function in this way. This student had completed a degree program and thesis with me earlier. Whenever I had requested that this person follow up with staff or faculty members, this typically did not occur, leading to delays in the student's progress and complications as I made follow up inquiries. Regarding "Please note that you were not included on the request since I assumed that it was my responsibility alone," I felt baffled as this student knew the ground rule and that the reasons for it had been explained. Moreover, the student was not in fact taking responsibility for personal actions because of the dependency on me to explicate what to do and to communicate with others on this person's behalf. Finally, the assertion "I hope that you were not offended by either the incident or the attempt at humor in the successive emails" evokes more thought—the claim involving independence in the earlier email message produced a barrier that could have been avoided. However, as it turned out, the reflective space that I had given the student combined with my personal distance and dispassionate tone seemed to have the desired effect: subsequent to these episodes I had been "cc'd" on all official correspondence. The student has since made the expected progress in the academic program whereas earlier there had been stymied activity only.

In the next section I attempt to provide perspective, balance, and hope by briefly exploring what the WIT doctoral group learning process looks and feels like when it is functioning synergistically and in concert with the expectations informing my mentoring creed.

A Doctoral Supervisor's Mentoring Creed in Action

Mentoring Creed—Rule #1 (Supporting Interdependence)

The WITs express gratitude for the peer mentoring they receive through the cohort that has met in my home once monthly for years. Despite the various stages of matriculation reflected, based on the input received no one is made to feel more or less important than anyone else. Students further along

in the process help those still doing coursework, and those just beginning are encouraged to help those more advanced by asking "naïve" questions and by offering feedback. A student who joined the WIT cohort in 2006 emailed me after the first session, saying that it had proven "refreshing" because, unlike graduate coursework, the meeting was "simultaneously casual and intense, as well as student-led and, unobtrusively, professor directed." In this cohort, mentoring transpires across all programmatic levels and differences, primarily gender, race, and class.

Support for student interdependence and goals within the cohort is evident. Members regularly underscore the importance of our learning community. For example, several WITs have expressed pleasure while in doctoral candidacy with the progress they had unexpectedly been making, which culminated in graduation. They had joined the group after having failed their proposal defenses with another dissertation supervisor, from disciplines outside educational leadership. These individuals have stressed that such cohorts as the WIT are rare in their experience.

WIT members support one another in their goals and aspirations, a reality that seems to undergird cultural change. Because they share the goal of completing the doctoral degree and the quest of learning, the students relate well to one another, forming strong interpersonal bonds and friendships. With one another's support, meeting deadlines and following guidelines become easier. WITs have described the metamorphosis experienced after joining the cohort, as in: "It wasn't until recently, through pointed but caring conversations with my major professor, that I took ownership of the doctoral process."

The group also supports members by sharing ideas and thoughts about the materials presented at the WIT meetings. In fact, the simple accountability of knowing that their work will be peer reviewed encourages focus and accountability: "You want to do your best, and you know that other WITs will be looking at your work, so I try to give good hints and advice." Moreover, many WITs believe that the expectation of sharing and reviewing others' work fuels motivation. They want to be seen as serious, prepared learners and contributors to their productive learning community: "I didn't want to look unprepared and unread, so I would read others' works as

assigned. If I was on the agenda, I knew people were expecting a product. I didn't want to let them or myself down."

Overall, the WITs find the support from the group invaluable. The suggestions from both their major professor and peers inform their subsequent work efforts. In this manner, the WITs believe that the cohort significantly improves their chances of success in the doctoral program and as graduates as well. As one WIT put it, "I can't imagine doing a doctoral degree without this kind of help, or writing for publication alone, or seeking placement or promotion afterwards without the support of my mentor and the group. Unfortunately, some students have no choice."

Mentoring Creed—Rule #2 (Meeting Preparation)

A revealed, the WITs bring their preselected writings to the cohort meetings for assistance from their peers and mentor, who have prepared by reading the material and providing detailed written comments. Prior to the meeting, the WIT manager (a peer who is a student) creates the student-based agenda, both soliciting volunteers to subject their work for review and obtaining feedback from me as to who would be good to have "up at bat" and with what material; the manager then electronically distributes the agenda and all pertinent documents in advance. This enables the group to prepare for a meaningful discussion of the scheduled papers and questions raised. The WITs support this active involvement with such comments as the "process we use to communicate and work keeps me on my toes." Members are also conscious of the accountability associated with participation: "I know people are expecting me to be there and with helpful suggestions. I can't let them down." By applying their energies to a peer's drafts, WITs know that the helping hand will be reciprocal.

Mentoring Creed—Rule #6 (Fostering Safety)

Recognizing the importance of a "safe environment" for doctoral students to experiment with ideas and research structures, I have asked the members about their level of comfort within the cohort. Overall, the students have described their experiences as "safe" and "nonthreatening." Most newcomers are initially intimidated but they adjust.

Clearly, interdependence within mentoring cohort groups should not strictly conjure a rosy picture. For instance, WITs can become irritated with the depth of probing generated relative to their drafts and the abundance of changes suggested in the areas of writing and research, especially by those in an earlier stage in their program or those with whom they do not have a close friendship. This example underscores the importance of patience, power-sharing, and generosity in situations requiring interdependence.

Safety, comfort, and momentary discomforts—some attributed to ego conflicts—are all part of the interdependence at play within the WIT cohort. Regardless, the focus remains on members helping one another to avoid poor performance and strengthen opportunities for success. Overall, members believe that a successful group environment consists of individuals who hold one another accountable for being productive, for producing quality work, and for being socially connected. As one WIT aptly stated, "I know I am not alone; there are others who feel the way I do about the task at hand. They are with me, and I am with them."

Given the synergistic nature of the cohort, power must be balanced between the professor and the peers, and among the students themselves. Realizing the importance of authority, governance, and control as potential issues, I have sought honest feedback on the power dynamics within the group. Student feedback has suggested that power within the group is generally balanced. One WIT plainly stated: "There is no power imbalance. Our agenda is student generated. Everyone shares ideas and notions equally. My professor makes sure that all meetings have a "round robin" format, so there's time for each person to share suggestions."

The WIT cohort draws its strength from these highly synergetic relationships and dynamics. Indeed, the comfort and security of membership is of uppermost importance, as a feeling of safety helps ensure intellectual risk-taking: "It's like I know exactly what my peers are going through because I have been through it before, or I'm going through it right now. That is a very comforting thought." Another WIT added: "I really look forward to meeting with the WITs. I know when I leave each session I will do so with something valuable that I can use to improve my writing and myself."

Mentoring Creed—Rule #7 (Constructive Criticism)

Importantly, students find the critiques of their writing critical to their development and progress and an invaluable aspect of the mentoring cohort. Assistance with deepening thinking and improving writing within the context of social science inquiry is a primary motivator for attending meetings and helping others. Here is how one WIT explained this transformative process:

At first, I was really discouraged by the complexity of the comments made at the meetings and the numerous writing changes. But I got over it. I realized that if I really thought hard about the issues raised and considered what the group suggested relative to my own writing that my work would probably get much better. And it did. And I'm also moving along faster.

Internalizing constructive criticism, another commented: "With the feedback I receive that I reflect in my papers, I can see myself growing as a writer within a social context."

Critical support is also extended in an effort to help WITs with the difficulty they face clearly and completely expressing their ideas. As a result, the meaning and significance of their research findings are often obscured due to imprecise and overly complicated sentence structures. Addressing this challenge sometimes requires such writing activity as simplifying sentences, adding explanation, examples, or qualifiers, incorporating evidence for assertions, and removing hyperbole. During the WIT sessions we actually undertake rewriting some ideas and sentences together. The students whose works are being reviewed are often asked to state aloud what they mean by a particular idea; from there, clarity is rendered orally and the new thoughts are immediately translated into written form.

Constructive criticism is offered within the group regarding conceptualizing, developing, and formatting one's research, as well as creating the instruments for data collection and outlining procedures. The cohort provides a place for the research format to be discussed and explained. WITs share among themselves their own wise counsel, as in: "As we have learned in this room, whatever you pick as the magical number of people to interview, make sure it makes sense to you. You have to justify

the number selected to your committee. It's a meaningful selection, not arbitrary." Another agreed: "Yes, this is where my committee nailed me. I had to have a reason as to why I picked the number that I did but I couldn't think of one."

The WITs also need support with fairly mechanistic tasks, such as writing grammatically correct sentences and consistently applying the American Psychological Association (APA) format. Indeed, my students have problems documenting sources properly, despite the hand-on attention given to this task. One WIT explained that he had simply "never learned this stuff before." But the student followed up after receiving help from the cohort: "I'm starting to work it out. I don't feel so dumb, because all of us are working together." The APA manual covers not only proper reference citation but also many other crucial research elements, which the students are exposed to at all sessions. As one professor aptly stated in a study of mine that incorporated an analysis of assisted learning in doctoral education and reform, "doctoral students need to learn how to write effectively within the field's protocols" (Mullen, 2006, p. 105).

In addition to writing and reporting, appropriate research practices also proved to be troublesome for many WITs. Indeed, even though the cohort spends many hours discussing approaches to collecting and analyzing data, ethical problems nonetheless arise. A student who had been programmatically inactive for over a year had inadvertently collected data without the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) human subjects' approval. As this move was clearly unacceptable, this person needed guidance and options before proceeding.

Implications for Doctoral Education

The doctoral situations previously described have at least four implications: (1) ground rules that arise out of social participation should not be discarded without negotiation; (2) doctoral learning is fundamentally socially based and action oriented; (3) independence without interdependence is an illusion, especially for those graduate students for whom the academy and its practices and procedures are unfamiliar, and (4) synergy experienced at the level of the group gives buoyancy to mentoring/supervisory creeds (or contracts). Regarding the latter point, the

potency of Iranian scholar/cohort leader Nafisi's (2004) words is worth highlighting,

That room, for all of us, became a place of transgression. … Sitting around the large coffee table …, we moved in and out of the [texts] we read. Looking back, I am amazed at how much we learned without even noticing it. (p. 8)

Becoming absorbed in learning with others seems to be an outgrowth of groups that offer a safe haven in which to co-mentor and take intellectual risks (Mullen, 2005; Mullen, in press).

Because students are not privy to what faculty know, how we work, and the nuances that shape our life worlds, we need to render transparent the expectations of performance, behavior, and interaction we take for granted. In my experience, transparency of values combined with documentation of expectations, especially where these change strategies are cooperatively enacted sets the conditions for learning—doctoral students should not have to resort to inferring norms, structures, and processes based on faculty behavior and innuendo. I think that Fullan's (2006) perspective on "cultural change" as pertains to the culture of schools can be applied to doctoral education, as this process "depends fundamentally on modeling the new values and behavior that you expect to displace the existing ones" (p. 57), as well as "carrying out important work jointly" (p. 54).

The doctoral mentoring creed I have created with student input will hopefully offer a template for use by faculty committed to mentoring graduate students. I recognize that it can literally take years for professors to develop the know-how that moves their students forward with respect to their university's graduate systems and protocols; they must also learn how they themselves work best vis-à-vis students, develop those vitally important relationships with gatekeepers, and understand how one part of the system relates to and affects another. While my mentoring creed focuses on individual student and group-based behavior, other possibilities come to mind, such as action-based belief statements that specify expectations for supervisory behavior and performance.

Clearly, the mentoring creed, an idea of my own, could serve to stimulate the foundational work of graduate supervisors so inclined. It can function as an example of "assisted learning" or even as a "fundamental best practice" of doctoral programs in educational leadership and administration and other education disciplines (Mullen, 2006, p. 105). In order for cohort mentoring groups to form and thrive, expectations must be recorded, ideally collaboratively, and updated over time. Committed doctoral supervisors know first-hand that mentoring is a complex and demanding activity necessitating a long-term commitment to individual students for which "contracts" serve as anchors.

A mentoring creed can offer vision and protection, but it is only a guide, largely because "social interactions are extremely complicated" (Winston, 2006, p. 123). On an abstract level, practical leadership anchored in contractual understanding and nurtured through positive interdependence facilitates the learning capacity of individuals and groups. On a human level, interactions and relationships are works in progress—these are often times messy, unpredictable, and at times unresolved. Nonetheless, critical reflection on doctoral mentoring enables personal troubles and sensitive issues to be articulated. Importantly, this activity allows public discourse to be framed and possibly heard.

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Mentoring Doctoral Students: The Need for a Pedagogy

Introduction

I came to the university to receive my master's degree and transition seamlessly into K-12 education as a teacher. My career aspirations did not include a doctor of philosophy in educational administration. Plans changed midway through my first year because my mentor presented the idea of attaining my PhD. (Andy Kufel, Virginia Tech, 2006)

In this chapter we discuss the importance of mentoring doctoral students through completion of degree and preparing them for careers either in K-12 education or as university faculty. In the process we discuss the need for a clear distinction between mentoring and advising. We strongly recommend that university faculty and administration develop and implement a mentoring system by which each doctoral student is appointed an academic advisor (advising) upon entry and then after 1 year in the program, selects a research advisor (mentoring). Faculty members rarely possess effective mentoring skills upon entry to the professorate. Departments, program areas, and university administrators must come to the realization that good mentoring occurs through continuous planning, practicing, and evaluating. As we use the term pedagogy to describe the development of an educational methodology, we also borrow the term to describe the need for the development of a mentoring methodology.

One of the most pressing issues facing American universities is the number of students who fail to graduate (Creighton, 2006). Graduation statistics reveal that approximately 26% of students who enroll as freshman do not re-enroll as sophomores (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2005); and further, approximately 52% of students who entered college actually completed their programs after 5 years (American College Test [ACT], 2002). In spite of all the programs and services to help retain students, according to a government source, only 50% of those who enter higher education actually earn a bachelor's degree (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census Digest of Educational Statistics (2004).

Though these alarming figures come from undergraduate programs, equally alarming figures surface from within doctoral programs in educational leadership. Smallwood (2004) poignantly indicated the attrition rate in doctoral programs could be as high as 50%. There is some evidence (Lage-Otera, 2006) suggesting women and minorities are leaving their doctoral programs in even higher numbers.

Based on their survey of 9,000 students from 21 doctorate-granting universities, Nettles and Millett (2006) indicated a substantive mentoring relationship with a faculty member positively affects progress toward the degree and more importantly significantly relates to completion of the PhD or EdD. Further, they reported that 70% of graduating doctoral students have a mentor.

Doctoral completion rates reveal more about what happens to students at the point of departure and much less about what happens to them along the way. More specifically, little is known about a doctoral student's relationship with faculty. The literature on mentoring centers mostly on undergraduate students and junior faculty. Much less is available in the form of empirical studies devoted to doctoral programs and the mentoring of doctoral students. Nettles and Millett (2006), in their longitudinal study of graduate education (1996-2006), expressed surprise about the limited attention scholars and researchers have given to studying doctoral education. They found the few existing studies to focus mostly on either the front-end of doctoral study (GRE takers) or data from the back-end (earned doctorates). But there is very little in between (Papalewis & Dorn, 1996). It is our intent here in our roles of graduate student faculty and mentors to focus on the in-between, where we posit the problems lie. In light of dismal time-to-degree ratios and even more dismal doctoral completion rates, a careful analysis of effective mentoring in doctoral programs is imperative.

Returning to Undergraduate Retention Data for Insight

It may seem unrelated to draw a parallel between the study of undergraduate retention rates and a chapter devoted to the mentoring of doctoral students. However, some important information from very recent studies can be considered as significantly related (e.g., Chronicle of Higher

Education, 2005; Creighton, 2006). For example, one of our themes is the alarming 50% non-completion rate of doctoral students in educational leadership. As mentioned earlier, much of the literature on mentoring focuses mostly on undergraduate students and much less exists in the form of empirical studies devoted to the mentoring of doctoral students. Is it perhaps wise at this juncture to investigate any factor that may transfer from one area of study to the other?

In a recent study, Creighton (2006) investigated the relationship between graduation rates at University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) public universities and the percentage of students from underrepresented populations (e.g., African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American). Results revealed graduation rates for the subgroups ranging from very low graduation rates of 20-30% to very impressive graduation rates of 94-98%. Creighton's further question focused on the reason for such wide disparity among universities considered more alike than different (i.e., research institutions with prestigious Carnegie classifications).

Creighton first found 11 universities with graduation rates for underrepresented populations above 70%. The rationale for selecting universities having graduation rates of 70% or higher was to highlight the universities that at least matched the 70% national average graduation rates of Whites (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2005). These 11 universities and their 6-year graduation rates for underrepresented populations are displayed in Table 1.

The important finding in Creighton's study revealed the 11 UCEA universities having programs in place to further the academic success of underrepresented populations, such as the mentoring and advising of students with substantive faculty-student interaction, mentorship, and participation in student organizations. The institutions showed a high regard for diversity and fostered a college climate of genuine concern regarding the possible effects that anticipatory stress could have on the interaction of minority students. In addition, the faculty and student affairs professionals at the 11 UCEA institutions are acutely aware of the varied effects that ethnic group membership have on the social encounters of these students

and exert collaborative effort to actively address issues related to the social experiences of racial-ethnic group members.

Table 1 UCEA Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity (L. Creighton, 2006)

African-American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian
University of Virginia 87.3%	College of William and Mary 98%	University of Florida 81.3%	University of Virginia 93.4%
College of William and Mary 74.6%	University of Virginia 94.2%	Texas A & M University 79.3%	University of Michigan 87.4%
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 70.7%	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 77.8%	Miami University (Ohio) 72.7%	College of William and Mary 86.9%
University of Florida 70.7%	Miami University (Ohio) 77.2%	Auburn University 72.2%	University of Illinois (Champaign) 85.8%
University of Connecticut 70.2%	University of Michigan 76.2%	University of Maryland 70.1%	University of Florida 82.7%

The counseling programs at the 11 UCEA institutions cited as having high graduation rates for these students have programs in place that help foster students' self-efficacy. These schools have professional counselors or graduate student advisers available to assess students' academic and personal needs. Taking physical, economic, social, and cultural environments into consideration, counseling staff members work to involve students in academic and extracurricular activities that integrate them into the campus community and promote personal well being and success. These programs encourage students to maintain respective cultural values and

simultaneously employ strategies to negotiate negative messages possibly perpetuated by the dominant society (Lesure-Lester & King, 2004).

At the University of Virginia (UVA) in Charlottesville, a structured and intensive peer advisor program exists for incoming minority students (Olson, 2006).Throughout the first year, the UVA mentoring program sponsors on-campus activities including meals, weekly study sessions and celebrations of milestones such as completing the first semester. It includes personal touches like birthday cards and handwritten notes of congratulations for good grades. After the first semester, students can choose to be mentored by a faculty member. The University of Virginia acknowledges the role of advisor as important, but also considers the powerful effect of authentic mentoring.

Creighton (2006) posits the following:

A strong recommendation is made for administrators and policy makers at all universities to utilize substantive mentoring processes with students from underrepresented populations at their institutions. Obviously, there may not be enough faculty members to assign as mentors to each and very student, but not to investigate alternative uses of mentors is educationally and ethically irresponsible. (p. 113)

It is especially noteworthy to point out that this UVA mentoring program makes a clear distinction between advising and mentoring. Much of the advising role in the first year is programmatic and can be carried out by non-faculty members (e.g., graduate students or staff members). But the important responsibilities of mentoring students with support in academics and toward research and other professional activities is a faculty member in the student's discipline.

Advising Versus Mentoring

A major criticism of previous work in the area of mentoring in higher education has been a lack of clarity as to what is mentoring (Santos & Reigadas, 2005). Consequently, this misunderstanding has likely impeded the development of a theoretical and conceptual base from which to

examine university-based doctoral mentoring programs. To successfully develop such a base, we must first distinguish between advising and mentoring.

An advisor is a person (not necessarily a faculty member) who is typically assigned to a department or program to meet with the student, to provide advice on degree plans and what courses to take, and address other academic issues or concerns. A mentor, on the other hand, is a person (a faculty member) who the student seeks to emulate professionally, and a person the student chooses to work with and learn from during the research process (Nettles & Millett, 2006). The mentor provides the student with an environment of reciprocity, where the faculty member benefits professionally as much from the relationship as does the student. The two are involved in reciprocal and simultaneous support, where both benefit and contribute to the process. For example, good mentors share professional conferences and publishing opportunities with their doctoral students. At the most basic level, "a mentor is a faculty person who establishes a working relationship with a student and shepherds her or him through the doctoral process to completion" (Nettles & Millett, 2006, p. 98). At higher levels, good mentoring extends beyond the completion stage, preparing the student to become marketable after graduation. In a real sense, student and mentor become lifelong colleagues.

Whether the term used to describe the relationship between a doctoral candidate and a faculty member directing dissertation research is advisor, coach, mentor, supervisor, role model, major professor, or chair, there is general agreement that having a mentor during one's doctoral work significantly increases the chances of finishing the degree and facilitates entry into the academic world (Lage-Otero, 2005). Galbraith (2003) further states:

… while advising is a short-term process where the focus is on giving information and guidance to the learner, mentoring is a more intricate long-term, one-on-one relationship that goes well beyond simply providing information. True mentoring is a complex process between professor and adult learner that supports a mutual enhancement of critically reflective and independent thinking. (p.16)

We have served as faculty at 6 regional and research universities during our careers. Rarely has there been any thought given to the notion that effective mentoring is analogous to good teaching that requires knowledge and skills that must be developed, carefully organized, practiced, and assessed.

A Pedagogy for Mentoring Doctoral Students

In most cases, good mentoring does not just happen or occur without careful and thoughtful planning and practice. Learning how to be a good mentor is time-consuming and unfortunately does not carry the "expectation" or "reward" from academe. Though occasionally promotion and tenure policies address the number of advisees a faculty member carries, few faculty assessment systems include recognition for the quality and effectiveness of doctoral student mentoring (e.g., Mullen, 2005).

Confounding the need for faculty and universities to develop good mentoring skills is the realization that the mentoring role is dynamic and will change, depending on the needs and stage of development of the student. For example, mentoring a doctoral student upon entry of the program is certainly different and requires different mentoring skills than mentoring a doctoral student during the dissertation process. Having served as faculty in four different university doctoral programs, we find very little emphasis or guidance placed at the institutional level on how one develops into an effective doctoral student mentor. Yes, there is the expectation and responsibility to serve, but absent is any guidance or support toward the development of effective mentoring skills from the institution, college, or department.

Defining the Practice of Mentoring

A discussion of the definition and purpose of mentoring helps to frame a pedagogy of mentoring. If we agree that a major goal of mentoring is to facilitate the doctoral student becoming "an independent professional researcher and scholar in their field, capable of adapting to various research arenas, whether university or field-based" (Pearson & Brew, 2002, p. 139), then the profession needs to explicitly support and encourage such development.

Returning to the distinction between advising and mentoring, we suggest effective mentoring must include helping the doctoral student with research productivity. Though research productivity may vary from institution to institution, we are defining scholarly productivity as involving the production of conference presentations, journal articles, research briefs, book chapters, and books. Though several studies report on research productivity after completion of the degree, much less evidence exists focusing on research productivity of students during doctoral study (Ethington & Pisani, 1993; Smith & Davidson, 1992). The significance of mentors helping students with scholarly productivity during their program of study relates to the importance of preparing them for careers as university faculty. Though few of our doctoral students in educational leadership programs move right into the university setting as professors, a far greater number eventually arrive there after a few more years in the field, typically in the roles of school or district leader. Nettles and Millett's (2006) study reports "most students in the humanities (73%), science and mathematics (59%), and the social sciences (55%) expected to become college or university faculty or to seek postdoctoral research or academic appointments" (p. 101).

We suggest that with such high numbers of doctoral graduates pursuing positions in academe as research scholars, much more attention and emphasis must be given to the mentoring students early on with their research productivity.

A Conceptual Model

To better understand the components of effective mentoring and its difference from advising, we present a conceptual model in Figure 1.
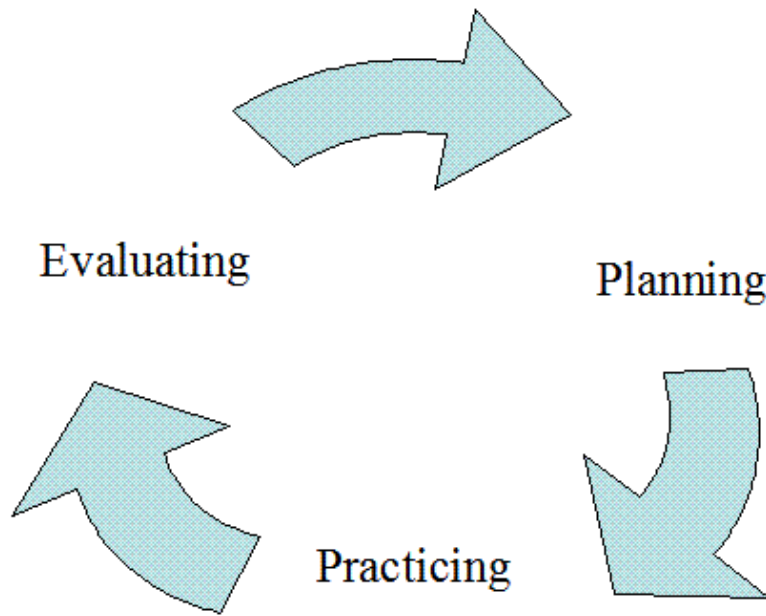
Figure 1. The PPE Cycle (T. Creighton, 2006)

With any endeavor, good planning is critical and increases the likelihood of success and effectiveness. It is a well-designed plan that shapes our specific practice and further helps to create an effective evaluation of the process. Our conceptual model is purposefully cyclical in nature since as evaluation occurs, we are likely to alter or adjust our continuing planning and practicing.

Though planning is situational to each faculty mentor and doctoral student, two common components should be included in any effective mentoring plan: frequency of contact and the monitoring of academic progress. Doctoral students continue to highlight frequency of contact as a factor most important to them. DuBois and Neville (1997) found length of relationship and average monthly contact accounted for 63% of the variance in ratings of perceived benefits from the mentor–student relationship. Faculty mentors will need to decide on what constitutes an appropriate

frequency of contact based on the student's point in program (e.g., coursework or dissertation stage) and her or his personal skills, knowledge, and dispositions. We suggest that mentor and student must decide up front a system of monitoring academic progress. They should agree on how often mentor and student will meet (e.g., monthly) and as importantly, what will be the expectancy for the student to return requested assignments or corrected/edited work. Where appropriate, we recommend a contractual agreement between student and mentor. Contractual agreements are helpful (and needed) in situations where the faculty member is new to the university or where the student and mentor do not know each other that well. In addition, in the event that a student becomes a procrastinator or fails to reach expectations, a contractual agreement serves as a reference point for determining the effectiveness of the relationship.

Practicing Effective Mentoring. There are many ways faculty mentors can practice good mentoring skills. Using our distinction between advising and mentoring, effective mentoring must include providing early and ongoing opportunities for doctoral students to become productive in research activities. The traditional measures of scholarly productivity have already been identified (i.e., publishing articles and book chapters and presenting papers at national conferences). In Nettles and Millett's (2006) seminal study of 9,000 doctoral students, research productivity proved to be an important predictor of doctoral degree completion. Doctoral students in education with research productivity to their credit were nearly twice as likely (1.8 times) to complete their dissertations than those without. Further, doctoral students with mentors were more likely to present papers at national conferences than their peers without a mentor. Much emphasis has been placed on the importance of practice fields in both business and education (Creighton, 2002; Kim, 1999). To assume that faculty will be effective mentors without many opportunities to practice their skills is analogous to expecting the medical doctor, professional basketball player, or the symphony orchestra musician to perform without opportunities to practice. University administrators, department chairs, and program leaders must provide the support and encouragement for opportunities to practice good mentoring skills. Given the track record of academe in these kinds of changes, we are concerned that this will not occur easily or without a major

shift in philosophical thought and commitment to improve the student mentor relationship.

Evaluating Effective Mentoring. Our conceptual model is purposely cyclical. Certainly planning and practicing are ongoing, but would be futile without a regular and valid method of evaluation. The mentoring survey we propose ([Click Here to Access Survey](#)) can be used as an evaluation instrument for the mentoring of doctoral students. Universities use student evaluation feedback to design and alter the delivery of instruction in the classroom–we suggest the same procedure be used to design and alter effective mentoring systems.

Parks (2006) developed this survey and suggests it be given to doctoral students on a regular basis and especially during the dissertation phase. The instrument is constructed to assess three major domains: communication between mentor and student, the faculty's ability to assist, and the faculty's willingness to assist.

Working For and Working With My Dissertation Chair

The following is a communication one of us had with a doctoral student (now a first year faculty) while she was pursuing an EdD in Educational Leadership at Sam Houston State University:

I continued to be challenged with understanding more and more of the research process as I defined my study and formulated my research methods. Integral to my confidence and success was ready access to my chair. While he had to change "hats" from boss to chair, he did so easily and with clear regard for my research needs. He provided necessary redirection and afforded insight into the more difficult aspects of educational research. Throughout my educational career, I have been mentored and have mentored others. My mentor encouraged the group dynamic, and the each one/teach one philosophy, the whole is greater that the sum of its parts. He realized that the power of leadership is not threatened by intellectual exchange. He mentored so that others would mentor. (Dr. Janet Tareilo, Stephen F. Austin State University, January 2007)

Best Practices of Mentoring Doctoral Students

Based on empirical examinations of graduate education, Boyle and Boice (1998) reported that exemplary departments distinguished themselves in three ways: They foster collegiality among 1st-year students; they support both mentoring and professional relationships between these students and faculty; and they provide 1st-year students with a clear sense of program structure and faculty expectations. Perhaps we can begin to identify important components of effective mentoring of doctoral students by borrowing from Boyle and Boice: collegiality, professional relationship, and communicating program structure and faculty expectations.

When looking specifically at best practices, Boyle and Boice (1998) identified three critical components of effective mentoring. First, they found exemplary programs to routinely assign academic advisors to students at point of entry in the program. The rationale here is important to note: during the first year of graduate work, students spend most of their time and efforts on coursework. It is during this first year that "course-related not research-related counsel is most relevant" (p. 90).

Second, exemplary programs have in place a well-structured procedure for graduate students to obtain research advisors after they have started the program. Opportunities are provided regularly for students to learn about research interests of the faculty. These allow students to observe faculty work habits, supervisory styles, availability, and personality–all important factors to consider in the selection of quality and responsive mentors. An example of such a procedure is the practice of requiring doctoral students to interview three to five faculty members to help decide who they might want to work with over the next 4 to 6 years.

Lastly, Boyle and Boice (1998) found exemplary programs to include opportunities for graduate students to socialize with both faculty and more advanced students. These social gatherings provide opportunities for students and faculty to talk informally. Doctoral students closer to the completion of their degree can provide equally important information to new doctoral students as they contemplate the selection of a research or dissertation advisor.

We wish to further highlight the difference between and need for both academic advisors and research advisors. Working with innovative and substantive mentoring programs for new university faculty, Mullen (2006) and Kram (1988) both underscore the importance of realizing that faculty have both career-focused and psychosocial scholarly needs. New faculty benefit from assistance in research and teaching but as important is assistance with adjustment and socialization. Hence, a doctoral student mentoring model must address both of these mentoring components. One ideal way to accomplish this is to assign academic advisors at program entry to make certain program structure and academic expectations are addressed with each doctoral student. Then sometime early in the program (e.g., during first academic year) students select a research advisor (more of a mentor) who in addition to addressing research needs (i.e., prospectus and dissertation) pays attention to role modeling, counseling, and friendship.

Recent attention (Mullen, 2006; Richardson, 2006) is drawn to the importance of doctoral students gaining practical knowledge systematically subjected to critical reflection. Practical knowledge is gained through experience under the careful eye of a mentor. Examples of practical knowledge in doctoral programs include active involvement in a variety of research-related activities such as submitting proposals for funding, teaching graduate classes, and presenting at national and international conferences. Our doctoral programs are replete with opportunities for gaining formal knowledge, but could benefit from more attention paid to mentoring students toward a wider breadth of practical experiences. Indications are that this does not happen without the student having a caring and guiding mentor.

Here is an example of a doctoral student response to aspects of the beyond the formal knowledge of mentoring:

A helpful mentor is an excellent teacher. With an approachable Socratic style, my mentor encouraged me to realize the increased knowledge of both mentor and mentee. A mentor with knowledge of the learner can be timely with the quantity of feedback and assignments needed to make progress in the dissertation. (Patricia Gaudreau, Virginia Tech, June 2006)

Concluding Thoughts

Of great concern is the reported evidence that approximately 50% of enrolled doctoral students in educational leadership programs will not complete their degrees, and that a large percentage of those who do will take an unusually long time-to-degree completion. Long time-to-degree completion amounts to a considerable waste of resources and an even more serious waste of time and energy on the part of the students and their faculty mentors and other supporters.

There is ample evidence that a significant factor in the low completion rates is whether or not the student has a committed and dedicated mentor. Graduating doctoral students overwhelmingly report their success due to the presence of a mentor during (and after) their program of study (Nettles & Millett, 2006; Stripling, 2004). These successful doctoral graduates define a mentor as someone the student seeks to emulate professionally and someone who facilitates personal, social, attitudinal, and academic adjustment to the doctoral program. In addition, they point to the mentoring relationship as continuing well beyond the degree completion, and including the preparation of career aspirations after graduation. A critical component of effective mentoring involves the mentor and doctoral student beginning their relationship earlier enough to create meaningful and substantive opportunities for the doctoral student to participate in conference presentations, journal writing, and other research activities. Too many universities delay the mentoring until the beginning of the dissertation process: much too late in our minds.

We insist that mentoring is difficult work and involves planning, practice, teaching, learning, and evaluation and thus should be viewed as a pedagogy in itself. But individual faculty usually do not acquire effective mentoring skills by themselves and rarely do universities and departments recognize or reward such behavior. The future is unclear but we are hopeful that doctoral students and graduates themselves will begin to demand a change.

We acknowledge the recent large sample of doctoral students surveyed by Nettles and Millett (2006) but point to an otherwise absence of comprehensive and reliable data related to doctoral students' relationships

with faculty. As of Fall 2007, we are conducting a nationwide investigation of mentoring and advising strategies across a sample of 150 doctoral programs in educational leadership with using Park's (2006) mentoring survey.

Some Bright Spots on the Horizon

Two of us are currently serving on a task force at Virginia Tech with 17 other research institutions selected by the Carnegie Foundation to spend the next 5 years charged with redefining and restructuring the EdD in education. Specifically, there is an emphasis to share ideas and programs as the EdD becomes more of a professional practice degree centered on the needs of practicing school leaders in addressing the real world of school improvement, student learning, and improved teaching strategies.

In some of the preliminary meetings and discussion, several have mentioned the importance of improving the mentoring process at the doctoral level. Most exciting is the emergence of a theme suggesting that perhaps we are in error assuming university faculty come to the job with built-in effective mentoring knowledge and skills. If the dialogue among 18 research universities begins to focus on the realization that effective mentoring of doctoral students involves learning and teaching along with many opportunities to practice the art of mentoring, a very significant scholarly opportunity exists to radically change the way we think about mentoring of doctoral students.

Equally exciting is a recent communication one of us received from Syracuse University, his alma mater related to mentoring of doctoral students. The following is presented to demonstrate that we must get beyond the traditional definition of advising and mentoring, and stretch to look for non-traditional resources outside of our departments and programs:

January 11, 2007

Syracuse University

Dear Dr. Parks,

On behalf of the Center for Career Services (CCS) at Syracuse University, we invite you to join a highly distinguished group of Ph.D. mentors. Here at CCS we are creating a special Mentor database of alumni who are willing to communicate with students regarding career information and advice. As a Ph. D. Career Mentor and someone who has "been there" and is working in the "real world," you can be an invaluable mentor to others who are exploring their options in the professional world.

What a valuable mentoring resource Syracuse University has tapped into. Though this innovative use of alumni mentors would not replace the face-to-face on site mentor, it certainly would add another layer to the development of a mentoring methodology (pedagogy).

We are encouraged and hopeful that our profession and its faculty have begun the important work of addressing the mentoring of doctoral students beyond the traditional role of advising.

End Note and Credit

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Author Biographies

Theodore Creighton is a professor and Program Leader in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Virginia Tech and serves as Project Director of the NCPEA Connexions Knowledge Base Project. Prior to joining the faculty at Virginia Tech, he served as Director of the Center for Research and Doctoral Studies in Educational Leadership at Sam Houston State University. From 2000-2006, he served as Executive Director of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration.

David Parks is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Virginia Tech where he teaches Leadership and Change in Education and Theories of Educational Administration. He is widely published in the area of principal preparation and serves as President of the Virginia Professors of Educational Leadership (VPEL). He serves as coordinator of masters and doctoral programs at several of Virginia Tech's off campus sites.

Linda Creighton, after several years in the principalship, is currently an assistant professor at Radford University where she teaches graduate education research. In 2007 she created a new post-baccalaureate degree for the graduate school at Radford University in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). She also serves as an assessment evaluator for the NASSP Assessment Center for aspiring and practicing school administrators.

Attraction and Selection of Applicants for a Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

Related Literature

Often overlooked by many doctoral programs in educational leadership are the dual demands associated with the attraction and selection of potential candidates. Far too often, these dual demands have been either ignored or loosely practiced by many doctoral programs in educational leadership. Attraction has been left to "walk ins" and selection has been unsystematic in many instances.

However, well known within the professional literature is that attraction and selection processes are mutually dependent administrative activities (Heneman & Judge, 2006). An able, diverse and willing pool of candidates is needed from which to choose among potential doctoral candidates. Valid choices among potential doctoral candidates are obtained most likely through systematic recruitment and valid selection procedures based on empirical data rather than on lackadaisical efforts and on subjective opinions.
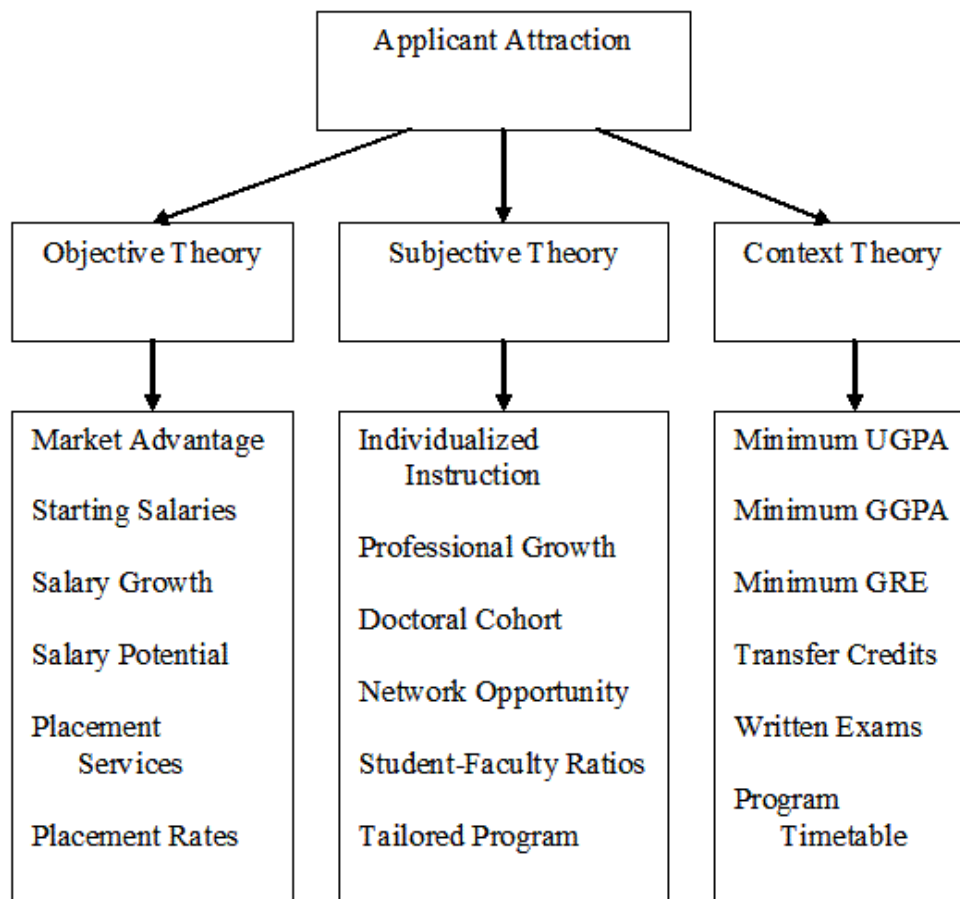
Doctoral Applicant Attraction

Research in general as well as research addressing potential applicants for a doctoral program in educational leadership has shown that individuals can

be characterized by different types of orientation perspectives and by unique sources of motivational factors. Most notably, potential applicants can be characterized as economic beings, psychological beings, or rationale beings. Further differentiating among these orientations are the salient motivators driving decision making of potential applicants given alternative choices.

To illustrate, the object theory of decision making indicates that applicants are economic beings who are motivated by fiduciary choices (Behling, Laborita & Gainer 1968). In contrast, the subjective theory of decision making views individuals as psychological beings driven by their affective needs within the decision making context (Judge & Bretz, 1992). Still different, the contextual theory defines individuals as rational beings seeking specific information (Winter, 1996) about demand requirements associated with choice (Young, Rinehart, & Place, 1989).

Each of these different theories has been explored within the doctoral recruitment process for students contemplating applying to a doctoral program in educational leadership. More specifically, Young, Galloway, and Rinehart (1996) developed recruitment brochures with each brochure emphasizing a single theoretical orientation, and certain salient motivators unique to each orientation were nested within each booklet. The brochures contained the economic incentives and psychological aspects associated with attending and with graduating from a doctoral program in educational leadership, and the admission and selection criteria used for acceptance and for graduation in this context (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Factors for Each Theoretical Orientation

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Objective Theory	Subjective Theory	Context Theory
Market Advantage	Individualized Instruction	Minimum UGPA
Starting Salaries	Professional Growth	Minimum GGPA
Salary Growth	Doctoral Cohort	Minimum GRE
Salary Potential	Network Opportunity	Transfer Credits
Placement Services	Student-Faculty Ratios	Written Exams
Placement Rates	Tailored Program	Program Timetable

These brochures were administered to independent groups of practicing educators contemplating applying to a doctoral program in educational leadership. As potential applicants for a doctoral program in educational leadership, these individuals were requested to evaluate the attractiveness of the program described in the brochure, and their attraction to this program as depicted within a recruitment flier.

Results from this casual study indicated that applicants are attracted most by the context perspective addressing admission and graduation

requirements than by those experimental conditions addressing economic or psychological advantages. These findings failed to be moderated by the gender of those taking part in this study.

Potential applicants sought information about "what does it take to be admitted" and "what does it take to graduate." With respect to these fundamental inquiries for specific information as requested by potential applicants, most doctoral programs in educational leadership provide little information about the former request (specific admission considerations) and when doing so only from a procedural perspective (what should be submitted [procedural] and not what outcomes are expected [substantive]).

To provide potential applicants with specific information about substantive requirements for admission to a doctoral program in educational leadership, Young (2005a) developed a format for an empirical compensatory model that can be tailored for use by most doctoral programs. This model considers the interrelationships among typical academic predictors used to delimit an initial applicant pool. Through using an empirical compensatory model, several advantages are likely realized by doctoral programs in educational leadership when attempting to attract an able pool of candidates.

More specifically, for many potential applicants substantive requirements for admission to and for graduation from a doctoral program are unknown. Information derived from an empirical compensatory model can provide these individual with substantive information through well constructed recruitment brochures. At minimum cost, these brochures can be circulated widely throughout public school districts and can provide potential applicants a "measuring stick" relative to their own credentials and to their probable success.

Well known by many faculty members are those applicants seeking information on minimum expected scores on predictors, especially on standardized tests. These persons have an academic history as reflected by undergraduate and graduate grade-point averages; they want to known the minimum score on a standardized test to be considered as a viable candidate given their past specific academic performances. By using an empirical

compensatory model derived from local data, these individuals can be given the requested information.

Not to be overlooked within the applicant attraction process are those individuals who applied but were rejected based on their past academic performance and/or on their obtained scores from a standardized test. For these individuals, substantive information can be provided about different possible alternatives involving either additional course work yielding higher grade-point averages and/or retaking the standardized test reflecting a higher level of performance. Although this information may well be beyond the realm of possibilities for some candidates, at least these individuals are informed on the basis of objective data rather than via subjective opinions.

Although getting applicants either to apply or to reapply is a necessary condition for generating an initial applicant pool, this effort is not a sufficient condition for selecting a quality student body. To select a quality student body, valid decisions must be made for differentiating between those likely to be unsuccessful and those likely to be successful in their pursuit of a doctoral degree. Such a differentiation involves the development and the use of valid selection criteria for delimiting an applicant pool.

Valid Selection Criteria of Applicants

At the basic level, selection is an organizational as opposed to an individual activity. As an organizational activity, selection involves delimiting an initial applicant pool of candidates seeking admission to a doctoral program in educational leadership. To guide this delimitation process, faculty members rely both on subjective and objective information.

Subjective information

The most common subjective data collected for applicants seeking admission to a doctoral program in educational leadership is reference information. Reference information can vary, however, in several ways. The variations have implications for practice as well as for validity.

From a practice perspective, reference information can be either confidential or non-confidential. This choice involving confidentiality is determined by the prospective applicant and must be provided by doctoral programs according to the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1996 (n.d.) through signatory authority on an official form. Interestingly, regardless of the option chosen by a particular applicant, both confidential and non-confidential reference information must be afforded the same weight by faculty within the admission process.

Beyond confidentiality status, reference information often vary in additional ways that have implications for validity. That is, reference information may be focused on personal or professional characteristics of applicants, may be norm referenced involving comparison with other individuals (ranking technique) or may be criteria referenced involving comparison with external standards (rating technique), may be unstructured as obtained through letters of recommendation or may be structured as assessed by a standardized form, and/or may vary by the content addressed by reference sources. To assess the validity of reference information for delimiting an initial applicant pool for a doctoral program in educational leadership, attention has be afforded to these different ways of variation.

Using actual field data for a particular doctoral program in educational leadership, Young (2005b) assessed the predictive validity for professional reference sources, for a norm referenced system of evaluation, for a standardized format, and for specific content items held constant across all applicants. Specific content addressed in this study are as follows: (a) intellectual ability, (b) educational knowledge, (c) motivational level, (d) research ability, (e) maturity, (f) work habits, (g) problem solving ability, (h) writing ability, and (i) verbal ability. Using a logistic regression procedure, this investigator found that those rejected and those admitted differed only on research ability and work habits when the interrelationship of these predictors were considered in a linear equation.

Objective applicant information

In addition to subjective information collected for applicants seeking admission to a doctoral program in educational leadership, most programs require objective information about applicants. Objective information is

assessed generally according to past academic performance and to future academic potential of perspective applicants.

According to Creighton and Jones (2001) as well as to Norton (1994), the academic predictors used by most educational leadership programs are grade-point averages and standardized test scores. Grade point averages are assessed both for undergraduate coursework and for graduate coursework. Collectively, these grade-point averages reflect the past academic performance of potential candidates.

Future academic potential of applicants is assessed typically by results from a standardized examination based on national norms. Used most commonly by doctoral programs in educational leadership are the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (Educational Testing Service, n.d.) and the Miller's Analogies Test (MAT) (The Psychological Corporation, 2004) as a means for satisfying basic admission requirements to a doctoral program in educational leadership. Both of these instruments yield percentile scores that are somewhat compatible regardless of the time when the test was taken through the use of national norms.

Assumed by most doctoral programs and by most universities within the selection process is that these academic measures enjoy high predictive validity. This assumption is so well ingrained that few, if any, doctoral programs in educational leadership or institutions of higher education ever test this assumption at the department or program level. As a result of this assumption and of this neglect in effort, several voids have been perpetuated in current knowledge.

One void concerns the actual utility of each academic predictor (GPAs and standardized test scores) for differentiating between successful and unsuccessful applicants relative to their probable success for a particular doctoral program in educational leadership. Interestingly, this concern has not been overlooked by publishers of the standardized tests. As noted by the leading publisher, "Departments using GRE scores for graduate admission, fellowship awards, and other approved purposes are encouraged to collect validity information by conducting their own studies" (Educational Testing Service, n.d.)

This recommendation, as made by a leading organization, highlights the fact that a single universal cut score fails to exist in practice. Importantly, this recommendation indicates clearly that validity is program specific rather than test score specific. That is, what is an acceptable score for one doctoral program in educational leadership may well be an unacceptable score for another such program.

Another void concerns the interrelationship among academic predictors used to delimit an applicant pool. Grade-point averages and results from standardized test scores are seldom completely independent measures. Those students who do well or those who do poorly on one type of academic predictor tend to mirror their performance, at least moderately, on other academic predictors.

Implied by any interrelationship among academic predictors is the notion that differential weights are needed among academic predictors to distinguish between those applicants likely to be unsuccessful and those likely to be successful. For this reason, it is impossible to inform applicants about a specific cut score on any academic predictor without considering their unique academic history.

In a recent study, Young (2005a) assessed the predictive validity of the most common academic predictors used to delimit an applicant pool for educational leadership (Creighton & Jones, 2001) and assessed the relative weights of these predictors in light of their interrelationships. This investigator found that all academic predictors have some utility for a particular doctoral program in educational leadership but varied considerably in their relative importance given their interrelationships. Within this study, discriminant analyses were used to develop linear equations for differentiating among those individuals rejected from a program, those admitted but not graduating, and those graduating.

Results from these analyses indicate the importance of standardized test scores (both the GRE and the MAT) over past grade-point averages. Standardized test scores were found to be the single most important predictor. For the GRE yielding scores on both verbal and quantitative measures, the verbal score was controlling and mirrors those findings for the MAT.

With respect to past academic performance as measured by grade-point averages, graduate grade-point averages were more important than undergraduate grade-point averages when assessed through a linear equation. Several reasonable hypotheses exist but have yet to be tested for these findings. These hypotheses are maturation for individuals and timeliness of academic measures.

Well known among academicians as well as among potential applicants is that individuals mature during their undergraduate career. Many are less than serious scholars as a reflection of youth or inexperience, academic focus, and/or undecided college majors. As a result of these potential reasons, a good deal of variability exists among undergraduate grade-point averages, and this variability has not been found to be systematically related to performance in a doctoral program focusing on educational leadership given a student's subsequent performance at the graduate level.

Graduate gradepoint averages, unlike undergraduate grade point averages, were found to differentiate between successful and unsuccessful applicants for a doctoral program in educational leadership. From a timeliness perspective, graduate grade-point averages provide a proximal measure of academic performance, while undergraduate grade-point averages provide a distal measure of academic performance. Given this time differential between graduate (proximal) and undergraduate (distal) grade-point averages, it seems only reasonable that proximal, as opposed to distal, measures would be the better predictor of future performance in a doctoral program in this discipline.

Conclusions

The importance of educational leadership for the public school setting is well documented within the professional literature. As such, able and willing educational leaders are needed to step "up to the plate" and to render their services. At present, one of the most efficient routes for capitalizing on leadership positions in the public school setting is a doctoral degree in educational leadership.

Doctoral programs in this area provide a gatekeeping function for entry to and for progression within educational leadership positions at the public

school level. To meet this challenge as well as to capitalize on this opportunity, only the "best of the best" should be recruited and should be selected for a doctoral program in educational leadership. However, often overlooked or taken as a given is that effective recruitment and efficient selection require proactive actions on the part of a doctoral program.

Based on the emerging research findings addressing recruitment and selection in this area, doctoral programs in educational leadership must be prepared to provide procedural as well as substantive information to potential candidates. Unsurprisingly, according to existing research, potential doctoral candidates are interested in what it takes to be admitted and what it takes to graduate because the investment of time, effort, and financial resources is a legitimate concern for most practicing professionals. Potential applicants as wise buyers within the academic marketplace rely on these types of information to guide their decision making.

Like potential applicants for a doctoral program in educational leadership, educational faculty members responsible for administering these programs want to make informed decisions. Poor selection decisions relative to admission of candidates to a doctoral program have many undesired consequents for faculty members as well as for institutions of higher education. Unsuccessful students may create a public relations problem and marginally successful students absorb an insurmountable amount of faculty time in conceptualizing, conducting, and defending an acceptable dissertation.

In light of the emerging research stream addressing the predictive validity of subjective information obtained from reference sources as well as the objective information involving past academic performances and future academic potentials of applicants, all data collected in this study indicate that improvements can be made over past practices as used by most doctoral programs in educational leadership. These improvements are not without effort on the part of educational leadership programs and require the development of an empirical compensatory model for advising potential candidates considering admission to a doctoral program in educational leadership and for delimiting an initial applicant pool seeking admission to this program.

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Author Biography

I. Phillip Young is a Professor of Education at the University of California-Davis and is Director of a University of California Joint Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership. His area of interest is Human Resource Management in the public school setting. He has served on the faculty both at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and The Ohio State University.

Figure 1. Factors for Each Theoretical Orientation

Applicant AttractionObjective TheorySubjective TheoryContext TheoryMarket AdvantageStarting SalariesSalary GrowthSalary PotentialPlacement ServicesPlacement RatesIndividualized InstructionProfessional GrowthDoctoral CohortNetwork OpportunityStudent-Faculty RatiosTailored ProgramMinimum

UGPAMinimum GGPAMinimum GRE Transfer CreditsWritten ExamsProgram Timetable

STRIVING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY: THE PERSONAL REFLECTIONS OF A DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Becoming a Department Chair

It had been a great 9 years. From my first day as a professor, I knew that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. What was there not to like? I had always enjoyed writing. As a doctoral student I discovered that doing research was a blast. After a few initial rocky class sessions, I discovered that teaching adult students was equally as much fun as doing research. On top of all that, I was getting paid to do this!

Now, 9 years later, I had matured a bit as a professor and lately had been feeling a slight void. I loved teaching, writing, and working with students, and I got along well with my colleagues, but we, as a department weren't really about anything. We prepared students to be school administrators and educational leaders, but the preparation occurred in a vacuum of sorts. What did we want our students to lead schools toward? The leadership preparation we were providing rarely asked the bigger questions of leadership preparation: What kind of world do we want? What does this mean for the education of children and young people? What kinds of schools are required to provide this type of education? What do school leaders need to believe, know, and be able to do to help develop these types of schools? Not only did we not address these questions in our leadership preparation programs, we, the faculty, did not even discuss them among ourselves. It was understood that we wanted to prepare our students to lead "good" schools that were "effective"—but what did that mean? What is a "good" school? What makes a school "effective"? Thus, in a sense, we were preparing educational leaders searching for a purpose.

After attempting a number of times to initiate discussions that explored questions like these, the void began to grow and gnaw at me. I increasingly realized that the university programs in which I had been teaching did not really stand for anything. It was okay for my personal work to strive toward the ends I viewed as important, but I wanted to be part of something bigger —a cause beyond myself (Glickman, 2003). I wanted to be part of an intellectual community with a moral purpose, a community where we collaboratively learned how to prepare leaders who would strive for similar

moral purposes. I wasn't unhappy in my work or at my institution—I just wondered if there was a place for me that was more completely fulfilling.

Thus, after 9 years of working as a professor in 3 different university contexts, during a casual reading of the Chronicle of Higher Education position announcements, one particular announcement caught my eye. It was for a department chair position that read very differently than other job announcements. It spoke of, as a department, striving for a moral purpose and a transformative vision of change. It spoke of a department that included educational leadership and cultural foundations of education and that wanted a department chair who would help department faculty explore the intersections of those programs and how the two programs could contribute to each other's areas. The announcement seemed to speak directly to me and to the void I'd been increasingly feeling. A little over a half year later I began what has become a decade long journey as department chair and professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG).

The Early Years: Intensive Discussion

At one of my first department meetings as department chair, after we'd spent a lengthy period of time over several meetings discussing our admissions policy for students, I asked the faculty if they'd like to start having two department meetings per month. We had been running out of time each month before we got to some of the bigger issues of purpose that were on our agenda. Not that, as I was quickly discovering, seemingly mundane issues such as admissions policies were value-neutral. Even deliberation on issues such as these spoke to who we were—and to what types of people/students we hoped to admit to our programs. Nonetheless, I felt that there were important things we were not talking about and wondered whether others might want a second meeting per month to discuss these—but they didn't. I did not push the issue and we continued to meet once per month. Several months later, however, as we began to find a few minutes here and there to explicitly explore who we were as a department and what "leadership" and "foundations" had to say to each other, we collectively became energized by the stimulating nature of the discussion. At the conclusion of one meeting, a colleague noted that these

were important issues and we needed more time to talk. Could we start scheduling a half-day mini-retreat once a month to talk about these issues? Thus, for the next several years we had department meetings once per month, a half-day mini-retreat every month, and regular program area meetings (i.e., masters, EdD, PhD).

I learned two lessons from these initial events.

1. Patience is necessary in working toward shared purpose and change. People need to get to know and trust each other somewhat by interacting around low-stakes issues before they are willing to commit time and disclose those things that live where their hearts and intellects intersect.
2. People will commit extra time to things that are meaningful to them. I believe our department faculty did not initially wish to commit to a second meeting per month for fear that it would be another iteration of a nuts-and-bolts, "business as usual," department meeting. However, once they experienced discussion of a different, more intellectually- and morally-engaging character, committing time was a moot issue.

Frustration or Breakthrough?

After the initial luster had worn off our highly-stimulating discussions, there were periods when I experienced at least a slight degree of personal frustration. "We've been at this for 2 years now", I thought, "but other than a bunch of interesting talk, we have nothing to show for it. We haven't really made any changes in our programs." Although on the surface this was true, in retrospect, transformative change was beginning to occur. Although course titles and required courses remained the same, undoubtedly, our discussions and heightened understanding of who we were and what we were about deepened our commitment to issues of moral purpose (including social justice), and impacted what we taught and how we taught in our individual courses. More significantly, over time we decided to formalize what we knew and had discovered about who we were, in a Statement of Commitments (see Appendix). We committed to "the development of a just and caring democratic society in which schools serve as centers of inquiry and forces for social transformation" and to a belief that "schools must foster social, economic, and educational equity… [and]

"honor differences in race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, and ability." This change occurred during a period of time before working for social justice had become a popular thing for educational leadership programs to do. We expressed a belief that "good schooling and a good society create occasions for people to build human, intellectual, and spiritual connections" and that "every human being is worthy of respect and deserving of dignity"—quite a contrast to the prevailing belief among policymakers and many educators that good schooling is defined by test scores; that a good society is one where our Gross National Product is higher than that of other countries; and where every student is "worthy of respect"—as long as her or his test score is high enough. We committed to preparing educators who were able to "identify and create practices that allow schools to function more fully as democracies while preparing students for democracy" and who "critique the way things are, explore the way life should be in moral and just communities, and stimulate action directed toward achieving the latter."

Our Statement of Commitments has become a living document. It guides virtually everything we do. It drives our course content and how we teach it. Student applicants for our programs are explicitly asked to address it in the personal statement they write to accompany their admissions application. We regularly ask ourselves in our departmental decision making about how a decision or way of acting fits with our Statement of Commitments. Faculty position candidates are asked to speak to it in their on-campus interviews—fit with our commitments is a prerequisite for serious consideration for faculty membership in the department. Occasionally, we make minor revisions to our Statement of Commitments, but it has become sacred to us. A few years ago one faculty member rewrote it a bit, but we had less of a sense of what it was saying—and less ownership, and quietly the revised version got lost, without much notice. The Statement is not a vision of where we want to go, nor a mission of what we hope to accomplish. It is an articulation of what we believe as a faculty, and what we are communally committed to in our practice as educators and human beings. In some ways, perhaps, it's close to what Glickman (1998) and others (i.e., Allen, Rogers, Hensley, Glanton, & Livingstone, 1999) have termed a covenant. It differs in that what they term a covenant is grounded in a school staff's knowledge and commitments about teaching and

learning. Our commitments are grounded in what we believe about the world we desire and what this means for education, schools, educational leadership, and how we engage with our students.

The lessons I learned from this period of my tenure as department chair include the following.

1. Transformative change is a long, slow process. It involves not only the construction of knowledge and meaning (Fullan, 2007), but a deep understanding of who we are, individually and collectively. One cannot simply write a meaningful mission or vision statement because one decides one wants (or needs) to. Meaningful mission and vision statements, such as our department Statement of Commitments, emerge from extensive discussions in which people come to understand each other as a collective and as individuals in a collective.
2. The initial evidence in the journey of transformative change may be invisible. It may occur in small, subtle ways (e.g., changes in what we do in our own individual classes), rather than in visible programmatic changes. It may also occur in ways that appear only marginally significant at the time (e.g., developing a Statement of Commitments), but that have a long-standing and powerful impact.

Early Programmatic Changes

Over time, structural changes began working their way into our programs, particularly our Masters of School Administration (MSA) program. We developed two new courses, ELC 675 Leadership for Teaching and Learning and ELC 670 Schools as Centers of Inquiry for the MSA program in order to add a greater instructional leadership focus and an enhanced emphasis on data-based decision making. We developed multiple "areas of emphasis" for the EdD and EdS programs in order to meet the needs of students entering the program with various backgrounds and levels of administrative licensure. A capstone experience was developed for the MSA program to replace the comprehensive examination, which had become a mostly meaningless exercise for both students and faculty. A mandatory dissertation proposal approval hearing was added to the EdD program in order to add rigor to the dissertation process and to better serve students throughout this process. Interestingly enough, although these were

all good changes that met our needs, they were focused more on inquiry, democracy, and responsiveness to our students than on a programmatic focus on equity and social justice.

Becoming a More Diverse Faculty

During these early years, our department was all white, mostly male, and heterosexual. Cognitively we realized the importance of becoming a more diverse faculty. Nonetheless, the first three new hires during this period of time, two females and one male were also all white. Our second wave of hires included a white male, a Latino woman, and an African-American woman, and the third wave included an African-American man, an African-American woman, and a white woman. For next year we have hired a Latino woman and a white male. Thus, over 10 years we have gone from an all white, mostly male, and entirely heterosexual faculty, to a faculty that reflects almost equal gender balance (7 males, 6 females), significant racial and ethnic diversity (8 Caucasians, 3 African Americans, 2 Latinos), and have also become more diverse in terms of sexual orientation.

The diversification of our department faculty had a major impact on our department. I believe that sometimes in organizations we say we value diversity, but what we really want are simply a few faces that are a different color. We want the owners of these different colored faces to be just like us. We want them to acquiesce, to become acculturated to "our" way of doing things, to discuss quietly, rationally, and diplomatically, and to politely and gently deal with issues of race and culture. That ain't the way it was in our department! I believe there were probably times—and there may still be moments—where some of our faculty longed for the days of polite academic discourse where "we all got along." They longed for the days when we all knew and respected the unwritten rules and those with the most seniority and/or power were able to prevail in decisions where there was a difference of opinion—and all others quietly accepted and went along. But that's not what happened in our department. After our third wave of hiring, we had attained a significantly diverse faculty, all of whom were insightful and critical, most of whom were regularly outspoken—sometimes in dramatic or confrontational fashion. All of a sudden, it appeared, that we had all these new problems in our department (and I'm referring to things,

not people here!). Of course, that was not true; the problems had been there all along. We simply couldn't see them. Or we simply didn't have the opportunity to confront them because we (the faculty) were all white and our students of color, although typically comfortable around the faculty, were not comfortable enough to raise real and personally-challenging issues of race and culture. Even though we had always been very concerned with issues of equity and social justice and could articulate and discuss theoretical and conceptual literature related to these issues, they looked different once they left the pages of a book or a journal and reared their attention-getting head in our department. This may have occurred, in part, because what happens in reality is so much more complex than the printed word. Thus, we moved in and out of periods where our discourse was not only intense, but also heated, and sometimes hurtful and/or dysfunctional. Although we are not in such a period right now, it would not surprise me if additional such periods still lie in out future. I believe we have been able to move through such periods and to grow from them because, at heart, we know we all embrace a common foundation of belief. But democracy and the struggle for social justice will never be easy.

The lessons I learned from this period of my tenure as department chair include the following.

1. Bringing new people on board can be an accelerant that fuels the fires of change if those individuals embrace the types of values, beliefs, and practices toward which you are working. This is particularly true if they have lived the change in a previous setting or experienced the reason things need to change. As our department became more diverse, our new faculty had not just read about issues of equity and social justice, but faced them on a daily basis as women, people of color, and gay individuals.

2. If the transition from a monocultural department to a multicultural department goes smoothly, it's unlikely that the department has really become more diverse. There may be more people of color running around, more women, more folks who are gay, etc., but if all that happens is that your department looks different when you're all gathered together, you are still missing a key ingredient of diversity— the different perspectives and lenses that those who have gone through

life as "the other" because of their race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation are able to bring to the department. If these "other" perspectives are voiced and heard in department discourse, there are bound to be instances of conflict—instances that will not always be polite and pretty if people are passionate about their work and the lives of others who are similar to theirs and different from theirs. As Fullan (1993) notes, "problems are our friends … the absence of problems is usually a sign that not much is being attempted … problems must be confronted for breakthroughs to occur" (pp. 25-26).

From School Improvement to Social Justice

As our department became more diverse and our discussions went from intellectual and stimulating to passionate and tension-filled (sometimes), our educational leadership program changed significantly. Structurally, this was most visible with the development of a new course that was intended to bridge the educational leadership and cultural foundations programs and to introduce doctoral students to the vision and commitments of the department. ELC 700 Critical Perspectives on Education, Leadership, and Culture is a requirement for all educational leadership (EdD) students but is also taken by many cultural foundations (PhD) students. While this course was part of the external face of change, the content of existing courses, often with traditional titles like "The Principalship" changed significantly. This becomes evident when we talk with our students.

Six years ago, one of the questions we would ask students in their MSA capstone hearing was, "What do you think is most important in this department: school improvement, democratic community, or social justice" (Murphy, 1992)? Although we were concerned with all three of these concepts, we fancied ourselves a social justice-oriented department. Our students, however, would typically respond with "school improvement" and, sometimes, "democratic community." A far distant third place response was "social justice." Now we no longer have to ask the question. Typically, as students talk about their experience and growth in the program, they almost always offer something along the following lines, "It's clear that you all believe in the same thing. Different faculty members have different personalities and different ways of teaching, but a consistent

message of the importance of social justice comes through in all the classes in the department."

The Present

Although most of our students resonate with our concerns for equity and social justice, some resist. This became outwardly visible a year ago when we had our university department review. As part of the department review, two external reviewers read our self-study document and spent a day on campus, visiting with students, faculty, and administrators. During the student session, while our PhD students raved about our department and their program, and our EdD students sat by somewhat passively, a small group of MSA students complained that our program had too great a focus on social justice and that they needed more of a "toolbox" of things they could use as principals. Apparently they argued, "Okay, okay, after a class or two we get it, but there's nothing we can do about it. We agree with all that equity and social justice stuff, but what are we supposed to do about it? There's nothing we can we do in our school to make it more equitable." In some respects, these students still did not "get it." Clearly, there are things that can be done in schools to make them more equitable and just places. However, in other respects, perhaps we as a faculty still also do not completely "get it."

Our world as university professors preparing educational leaders is a world of theory, research, and research-supported "best practice." As such, we often ignore or minimize the world of our students (particularly our master's students). Theirs is the world of practice—the world of students, teachers, and district bureaucracy and politics. Often, because we believe their focus is trivial or wrong, we do not give legitimate credence to their concerns with testing, accountability, and dealing with the myriad daily details of running the school. The issue for us is, how do we legitimate this world of school administrators without perpetuating it? Clearly, it is our responsibility to be somewhat idealistic and to create "disconnects" for our students that pull or push them forward. But perhaps, by itself, that is not sufficient. As I think about this tension and dilemma, I wonder whether, at least at the masters level, we ought to flip things around a bit. Rather than spending the first two and a half hours of a class on theories such as

resistance, cultural capital, social reproduction, and so forth and the last 15 minutes on implications, strategies, and practices, perhaps we ought to figure out a way of productively reversing these time expenditures. Is it possible to do a 30 minute mini-lesson on a social justice-related concept or issue, and then spend the next 2 hours collectively figuring out how we might respond and what we might do about this issue in schools? Perhaps, in masters programs where our audience is primarily PK-12 practitioners, we need to spend less time doing social justice theory and far more time inquiring about and developing practices and policies that positively respond to the issues raised by social justice theories and concepts.

Final Thoughts

As I think about my 10 years as department chair, it often strikes me that I am in a very different place in my career now than when I first came to UNCG. Ten years ago, I was still relatively early in my career in higher education. I had 10 years as a professor behind me. Now, a decade later, I have, hopefully, another one as a professor ahead of me. I have no intention of spending those years at any place other than the one I have spent the last 10 years helping to create. It is a good place to be and, certainly, one that always stimulates. I look forward to working with a new department chair and my colleagues in helping it become even better, as we collectively strive to create a world that is a better place for everyone to be.

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Appendix A

Statement of Commitments and Beliefs

Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

The Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations is committed to the development of a just and caring democratic society in which schools serve as centers of inquiry and forces for social transformation. We believe that:

- education is an ongoing process of knowledge creation and acquisition, lived experience, interaction with others, and conscious reflection;
- good schooling and a good society create occasions for people to build human, intellectual, and spiritual connections;
- schools must foster social, economic, and educational equity;
- honoring differences in race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, and ability are critical to human understanding;
- every human being is worthy of respect and deserving of dignity.

Our purpose is to develop educational leaders who work with parents, staff, students, and communities to develop critical understandings of the assumptions, beliefs, and regularities that support schooling and who identify and create practices that allow schools to function more fully as democracies while preparing students for democracy. We believe educational leaders should:

- advocate for teaching and learning by articulating and working to achieve a school-community's shared educational commitments;

- facilitate processes that engage self and others in critiquing the way things are, exploring the way life should be in moral and just communities, and stimulating action directed toward achieving the latter;
- mobilize economic, political, social, and personal resources to articulate and achieve a school-community's shared educational commitments; and,
- appreciate the joy of learning, delight in the growth of self and others, promote the love of learning, and create practices in schools that provide an outstanding education for all students.

Author Biography

Ulrich C. (Rick) Reitzug is a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and, for the past decade, has also served as department chair. His past editorial experience includes service as the editor of the Journal of School Leadership and as senior associate editor of Educational Administration Quarterly. A former principal, teacher, and district-level administrator, he has published in a variety of journals including the American Educational Research Journal, Educational Administration Quarterly, Journal of Curriculum & Supervision, Urban Education, and the Journal of School Leadership.

CONCLUSION

The publishing of the Handbook of Doctoral Programs in Educational Leadership: Issues and Challenges surfaces at a significant time of national attention on doctoral programs in educational leadership. Foremost, our goal has been to address the pressing problem of underreporting the progress made in advanced educational leadership programs. However, at the same time, we acknowledge the reality of outdated and irrelevant components of doctoral programs for educational leaders.

Some of the issues and challenges facing our profession need only programmatic redefinition. However others will require a redesign and transformation of doctoral education for the advanced preparation of school practitioners, clinical faculty, academic leaders and professional staff for the nation's schools and colleges, and the organizations that support them. Complicating the situation further has been the blurring of the distinction between the PhD and the EdD over the last century, requiring examination of purpose and content. The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), led by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and partnered with the Academic Deans from Research Education Institutions, is comprised of a network of nearly two dozen U.S.-based colleges and universities aimed at creating doctoral programs in education that are geared more for practitioners than professional scholars. These universities are addressing substantive redesign and transformation by looking at such questions as: How should the EdD differ from the PhD? Is the traditional dissertation the appropriate final product for the EdD? How can coursework better reflect job-related issues? And, how can we redesign the EdD while ensuring rigor at the same time?

The contributors to this Handbook have identified salient concerns and challenges to be addressed over the next several years and even decades to come. The educational leadership field is at a critical juncture: We can continue with the status quo or we can, as three of our authors posit, seriously consider disrupting it for the purpose of positive change. Yet another author draws attention to the importance of not only mentoring and advisement, but looking more closely at the front end of recruitment and selection. It is more than coincidental that several of the authors identify

mentoring as a key component of substantively effective doctoral programs and outline the crucial distinction between mentoring and advising, as well as between effective and ineffective mentoring involving individual students and cohorts. We can also learn by the exemplary models of doctoral programs presented by experienced faculty. Collectively, the authors highlight the importance of (1) recruitment and selection of doctoral students, (2) accreditation of programs, (3) principles and creeds of doctoral programs, (4) exemplary models to learn from, and (4) sociocultural influences affecting doctoral programs.

Where MUST we go from here? The editors and authors of this Handbook feel that the educational leadership doctoral faculty has begun to remedy the problem of underreporting doctoral development and refinement. We agree with Nettles and Millett (2006) that the challenges are not so much related to doctoral programs themselves but more so related to the doctoral education process. Our collective investigations of doctoral programs in educational administration (EdD and PhD) reveal well-constructed programs of study with highly-qualified doctoral faculty delivering them. We seem to be in general agreement with what specific courses, seminars, and internships doctoral students in educational leadership need. It is the more multidimensional and complex doctoral program process that needs our immediate attention. One of the authors astutely posits that university faculty in our field pay much attention to the front end of the doctoral process (recruitment and selection) and the back end (dissertation proposals and defenses) but pay far less attention to the in between.

Much research is needed to investigate the relationship between admissions criteria and program outcomes. For example, we generally agree that Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are helpful as a screening tool —but as one author believes, there is possibly a strong relationship between GRE scores and scholarly writing at the dissertation stage. One can stretch further and wonder if GRE scores might be related to time-to-degree and graduation rates?

It becomes clear from some of the chapters in this book that once a faculty body agree upon working definition(s) of mentoring that suits their context and needs, doctoral faculty must be provided the structure, support, and

encouragement to develop and practice good doctoral mentoring skills. The research is also self-evident regarding the role of effective mentoring relationships between faculty and students when it comes to time-to-degree and dissertation completion rates.

Nettles and Millett's work (2006) identifies many other challenges and issues for those of us working in educational administration doctoral programs to explore. In their 6-year study (1996-2001) they found the median elapsed time to degree was 5.75 years for doctoral students in education. Not meaning to insult any of our intelligences, we mistakenly translate this to mean that 50% of our doctoral students are taking 6 years or more to finish their dissertations. Below the surface, and even more troubling is the evidence that perhaps this time-to-degree figure (5.75) represents the line between completion and non-completion. We suggest this is the case—50% of the doctoral students in our discipline never finish the degree. This challenge needs immediate attention. "Shrugging our shoulders" is a "luxury" we simply cannot afford.

Though we have addressed numerous challenges and issues facing faculty and students in doctoral programs in educational leadership, we realize that other salient challenges have yet to be addressed and still others will surface through conversations about this book. Any problems and issues can only be identified, studied, and acted on once the dialogue among the colleagues in the broader field of educational leadership and administration begins. We are hopeful that this Handbook has accomplished just that.

In the Preface, we invited professors, practitioners, and doctoral students to join our conversation in an effort to learn about one another's advanced programs and to more fully explore contemporary issues in doctoral education. Twenty-nine education leaders contributed to the Handbook of Doctoral Programs in Educational Leadership: Issues and Challenges as a dynamic beginning dialogue.

Now, let the continuing conversation and tough work begin.